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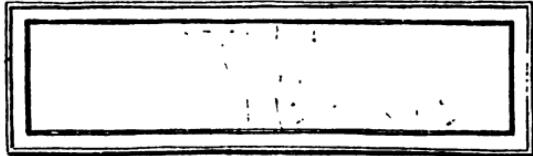
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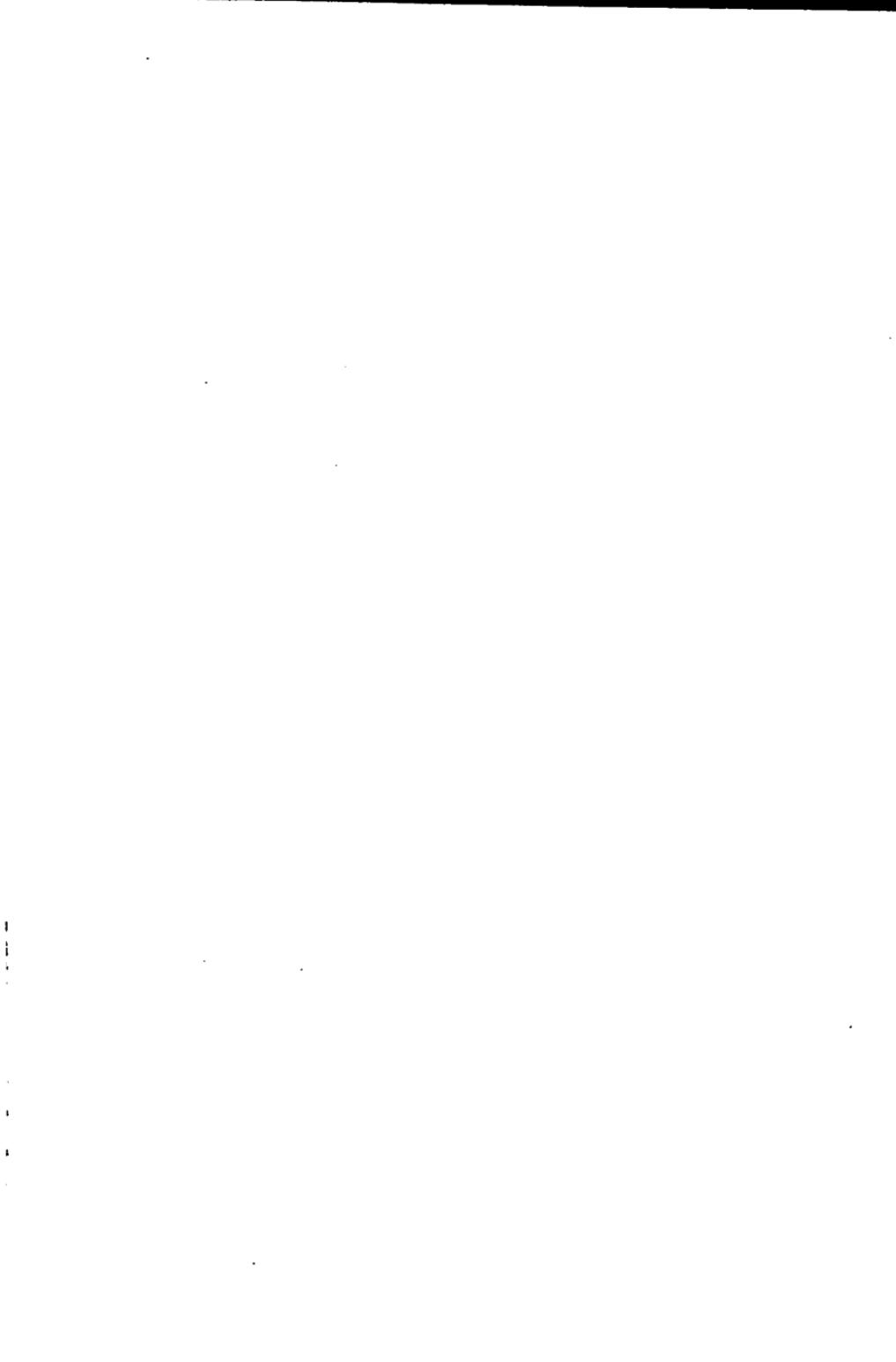
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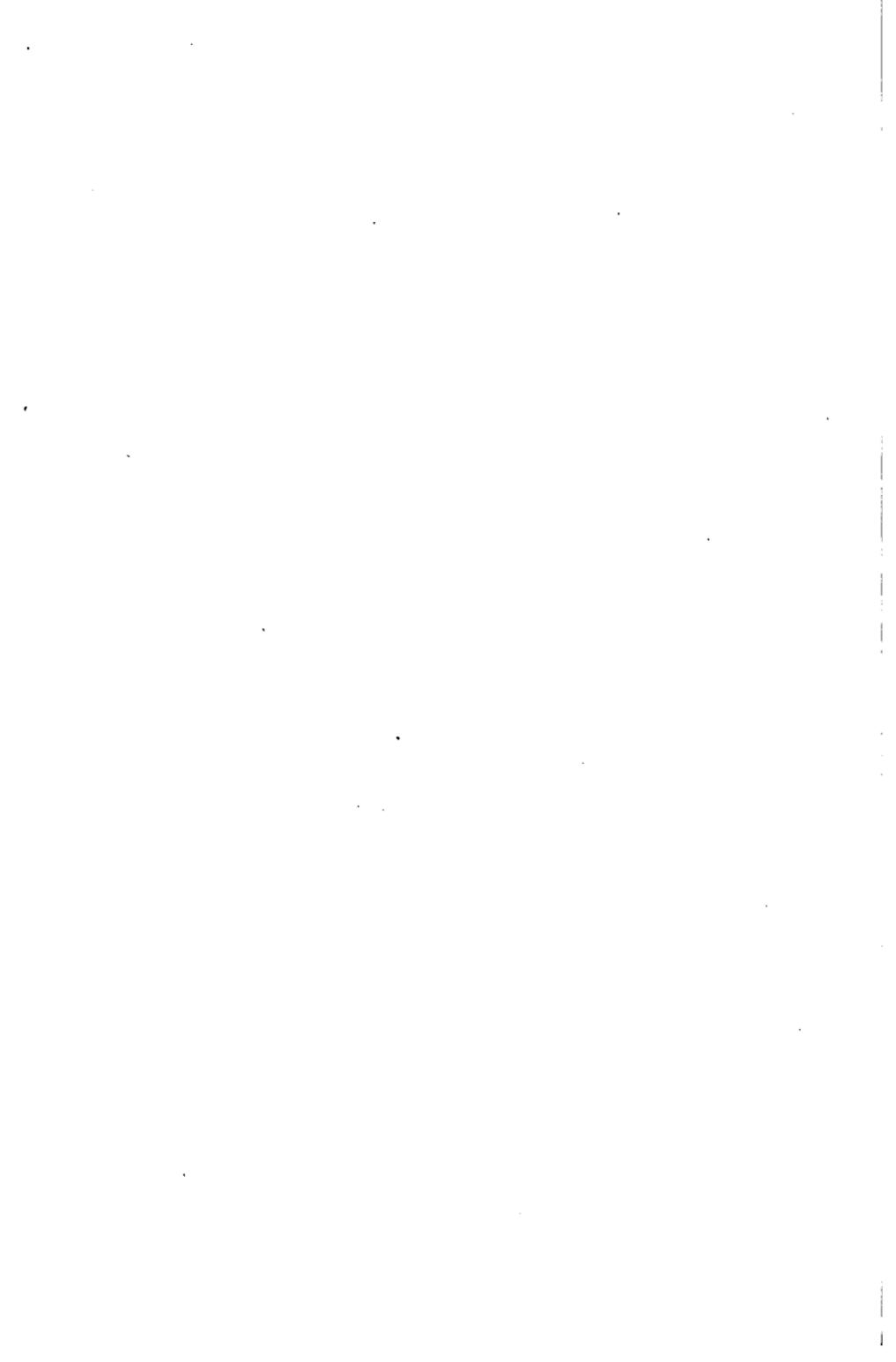
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RUSSIAN AUTHORS' LIBRARY

LEO TOLSTOY

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

Translated by
ARCHIBALD J. WOLFE

VOL. II.

LEO TOLSTOY
POSTHUMOUS WORKS

NEW YORK
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1920

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PREFACE.

In Vol. II of TOLSTOY's "POSTHUMOUS WORKS" the RUSSIAN AUTHORS LIBRARY presents two dramatic works of the sage of Yasnya Poliana,—"And a Light Shineth in the Darkness" and "The Living Corpse." The first of these dramas was left incomplete in manuscript form. The first four acts, indeed, are carefully worked out, but the fifth act appears in the form of a synopsis. The other drama, having found its way to the European and the American stage, is better known to the English-speaking public and is offered in this volume in the form of an unexpurgated translation of the original text.

"And a Light Shineth in the Darkness" portrays the conflicts in the soul of a Russian landowner who reaches the conclusion that it is wrong to profit by the toil of the peasants and that it is, therefore, wrong to own land, but is unable to act upon his convictions in the face of the determined opposition on the part of his own household. Unlike Nekhliudov in "Resurrection," Saryntzov is no libertine converted as the result of a moral shock. He is a model husband and father, a well-meaning landowner, inclined to be perfectly just and fair to the peasants who eke out a precarious livelihood on the lands which he owns by inheritance. He rejoices in the love of a wife who seeks to understand him, though she does not share his views.

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The drama opens with a clear delineation of the conflicts which have come perilously close to the disrupting of the household. Saryntzov refuses to lend moral or material support to his eldest son who is about to adopt the career of an officer of the guards. The father regards military service as contrary to the spirit of the Gospel. His daughter, Lyuba, inclines to side with her father. A visiting sister-in-law, horrified by the resolve of Saryntzov to divide his lands among the peasants, prevails upon him, by appealing to his sense of duty towards his children, to assign his holdings to his wife. Too soon he realizes that although he has technically freed himself from the "sin" of owning land he has not done his duty to his peasants. The family drifts further and further away from his ideas. Only his prospective son-in-law, young Prince Tcheremshanov, son of an ambitious and blindly devoted mother, decides to follow him. He refuses to enter military service and is arrested and cast into prison.

Tolstoy's familiar attitude to ecclesiasticism, to militarism, to the idle enjoyment of material prosperity in the face of surrounding poverty is illustrated in the various incidents of the drama, and the bitter realization that family ties at times interfere sadly with lofty aspirations is depicted with many intimate touches reminiscent of Tolstoy's own life.

The volume concludes with "*The Living Corpse*," the story of which is fairly familiar to the American public through recent stage presentations under the arbitrary title of "*Redemption*." The plot of "*The Living Corpse*" is based on an actual occurrence which came to the knowledge of the author.

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**AND A LIGHT SHINETH
IN THE DARKNESS.**



CHARACTERS

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH SARYNTSOV, a wealthy landowner.

MARIA IVANOVNA SARYNTSOVA, his wife.

Their Children:

LYUBA, eldest daughter, engaged to Prince Boris Tcheremshanov.

STEPA, eldest son, about to choose a career.

VANYA, a younger son, high school student.

MISSY, a younger daughter.

Two small children and an infant.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA KOKHOVTSEVA, sister of Maria Ivanovna.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH KOKHOVTSEV, her husband.

LISANKA, their daughter (also called LISA).

PRINCESS TCHEREMSHANOVA.

BORIS TCHEREMSHANOV, her son.

TONYA, her daughter.

A younger daughter of the Princess.

FATHER VASSILY, a young parish priest.

FATHER GERASIM, a visiting priest.

ALEXANDRE MIKHAILOVITCH STARKOVSKY.

MITROFAN ERMILITCH, Vanya's tutor.

GENERAL.

GENERAL'S AIDE-DE-CAMP.

COLONEL.

REGIMENTAL CHAPLAIN.

SENIOR and JUNIOR PHYSICIANS at the military hospital.

CLERK.

GENDARMERIE OFFICER. SENTRY.

GOVERNESS.

PEASANTS.

ALEXANDER PETROVITCH, a shabby-genteel.

PYOTR, a peasant.

IVAN ZYABREV, a dying peasant.

HIS WIFE.

MALASHKA, their little daughter.

EXPLANATORY NOTES TO NOMENCLATURE:

The polite form of address in the Russian language is to call a person by the Christian name coupled with the patronymic, the name of the father of the person addressed. For this reason the surnames of the characters are rarely used in dialogue.

*Of the diminutives used in this drama
the principal are:*

Alina—for Alexandra.

Borya—for Boris.

Lisa, or Lisanka for Elisaveta—Elisabeth.

Lyuba—for Lyubov. The English equivalent of Lyubov is Charity.

Missy, Masha, Manya—varying pet names for Maria.

Nikolenka—for Nikolay (Nicholas).

Petya—for Pyotr (Peter).

Sascha—for Alexandra.

Stepa—for Stepan, the Russian form of Stephen.

Vanya—for Ivan, the Russian form of John.

ACT I.

An enclosed veranda in a rich country mansion. In front of the porch are flower beds, a tennis court and a croquet ground. The children are playing croquet with their GOVERNESS. Seated on the porch are MARIA IVANOVNA SARYNTSOVA, an attractive, stylish woman of forty, her sister, ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA KOKHOVTSEVA, forty-five, fat, determined and stupid, and her husband PYOTR SEMENOVITCH KOKHOVTSEV, wearing a summer suit, fat, slovenly, with eye-glasses. A samovar and a coffee urn on a table set for breakfast. All are drinking coffee. PYOTR SEMENOVITCH is smoking.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

If you were not my sister, but a stranger to me, and Nikolay Ivanovitch a mere acquaintance instead of being your husband, I might have found this very quaint and sweet, and perhaps even encouraged him. *J'aurais trouvé tout ça très gentil**). But when I see your husband making a fool of himself, making a downright fool of himself, then I cannot refrain from giving you my opinion... And I'll speak up to him too, meaning your husband. *Je lui dirai son fait au cher Nikolay Ivanovitch***). I'm afraid of nobody.

**) I should have found it very neat.*

***) I'll tell our dear Nikolay Ivanovitch what's what.*

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MARIA IVANOVNA.

I'm not a bit offended, don't I see it all myself? Only I don't think it's as serious as all that.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

You don't think, but let me tell you that if you don't stop it you will all be paupers. *Du train que cela va.**)

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

What do you mean? Paupers—with their wealth?

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Yes, paupers. Don't you interrupt me, dear. What men do, is always right in your sight.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

I don't know, I am merely saying..

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

You never know what you are saying, because when you men begin to play foolish tricks, *il n'y a pas de raison que ça finisse***. I only say that in your place I should not allow this. *J'aurais mis bon orare à toutes ces lubies****). What does it look like? The husband, the head of the family, without occupation, drops everything, gives away all he has, *et fait le généreux à droite et à gauche*****). I know how it will end. *Nous en savons quelque chose******).

*) If it should go on.

**) There is no telling when it ends.

***) I would put a quick stop to all these whims.

****) And plays the generous man right and left.

*****) We know something about that.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

(To MARIA IVANOVNA.) Explain to me, Marie, what is this new school? I understand liberals, with their Zemstvo, their constitution, schools, reading rooms *et tout ce qui s'en suit**); even socialists, *les grèves***), eight hour day —this, too, I understand. But what is this? Explain to me.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

But he told you last night.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

I confess I failed to make head or tail of it: the Gospel, the Sermon on the Mount, doing away with the church, but how are we to pray and everything?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

That's the great trouble that he pulls down everything but does not build up anything.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

How did that begin?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

It began last year when his sister died. He had been very fond of her, and her death greatly affected him. He became very morose, kept talking about death, and was taken ill himself, as you know. And soon after his attack of typhus he was a changed man entirely.

*) And all that sort of things.

**) Strikes.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Still as late as last spring he called on us at Moscow, played whist with us and was very charming. *Il etait très gentil et comme tout le monde**).

MARIA IVANOVNA.

But even then he was already a different man.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

Just in what way?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Utterly indifferent to his own family and simply an *idée fixe* about the Gospel. He read it for days at a time, did not sleep nights, left his bed at night to read, made notes and excerpts, then he started to make pilgrimages to various bishops and hermits, always seeking advice about religion.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Did he partake of Holy Communion?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Until that time, since our wedding day he had not received for twenty-five years. And then he began to fast and receive in the monastery, but turned right around and decided that sacraments were unnecessary and church-going superfluous.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Just as I say, utterly inconsistent.

*) He was very nice and like everybody else.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Until about a month ago he did not miss a service and observed all days of abstinence, but suddenly he found all these things superfluous. You had better have a talk with him.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

I have talked with him, and will again.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

But that's nothing much.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Nothing much to you, because men have no religion.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

But permit me to say if he rejects the church, what is the use of the Gospel?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Ah, we must live according to the Gospel, he says, according to the Sermon on the Mount, we must give away everything.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

But how can you live if you give away everything?

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

And where did he find in the Sermon on the Mount a law that we must shake hands with the waiters? It says: "Blessed are the meek," but not a word about shaking

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Yes, of course, he is carried away, just as he always allowed himself to be carried away, whenever he took a fancy to anything; it was the same with his music, hunting and studies. But this does not make it easier for me.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

But why did he go to town this morning?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

He did not say, but I know that it has something to do with the timber case. The peasants have cut down a part of our forest.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

You mean the fir preserve?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Yes, they were sentenced to serve a term in prison and to pay a fine. He told me that their case was to be reviewed to-day, and I am sure his trip had something to do with it.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

He will forgive this gang, and the next thing you know they will be back chopping your park to pieces.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Yes, that's the way they start. They've cut down all the apple trees, ruined the green meadows by trampling all over them, but he always forgives them.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

Remarkable.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

That's why I say you can't let it pass without doing something. For if it goes on like this, *tout y passera**). I think that it is your duty as a mother to *prendre tes mesures***).

MARIA IVANOVNA.

But what can I do?

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

What can you do? Stop him, make it clear to him that this cannot go on. You have children. What sort of an example does he set them?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Of course, it's annoying, but I am trying to bear it and hope that this will pass just as his other whims have done.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Yes, but *aide toi, et Dieu t'aidera****). You must let him feel that he is not alone, and that this is no life for a man to lead.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

The worst of it is that he pays no more attention to the children. And it is left to me to make all decisions.

*) Anything may happen.

**) Take your measures.

***) Help yourself, and God will help you.

But I have a little baby on the one hand, and grown up children demanding watchful care and guidance on the other. And I am all alone. He used to be such an affectionate and solicitous father. But now he does not seem to care. I say to him yesterday that Vanya will not study and is sure to flunk, and he says it would be better for him to be out of high school altogether.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

And where should he go, pray?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Nowhere. That is the dreadful feature of it; everything is wrong, but he won't say what' is the right thing to do.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

That's odd.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

What is odd about it? It's our commonest failing: to condemn everything and to do nothing ourselves.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Now Stepa is through with college and is anxious to choose a career, and the father will not give him any advice. He intended to enter the bureau of a ministry, but Nikolay Ivanovitch told him not to; then he thought of the Horse Guards, Nikolay Ivanovitch emphatically disapproved; finally he asked him point blank: "What am I to do? Surely not plow the fields?" And Nikolay Ivanovitch calmly says: "Why not plow the fields? It's a lot better

than a ministry bureau." So what is the poor boy to do? He comes to me and asks my advice, and I must decide everything. But all the powers are in his hands.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

So the thing to do is to tell him plainly everything just as it is.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Yes, I shall speak to him.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

And tell him straight that you cannot go on like this, that you are doing your duty, and that he must do his, and if he will not, he must authorize you to do it for him.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Oh, but it's so disagreeable.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

I'll tell him, if you want me to. *Je lui dirai son fait**).

(Enter FATHER VASSILY**), a young parish priest, embarrassed and agitated, with a book in one hand, shaking hands with those present.)

*) I'll lay the law down to him.

**) Members of the Russian clergy are recruited principally from peasant or poor commoner families, pursuing their studies in seminaries with a curriculum of a somewhat low standard from the point of view of general culture. The attitude of the educated classes towards them is tinged with contempt.

FATHER VASSILY.

I've called to see Nikolay Ivanovitch, to return a book of his, so to speak.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

He went to town this morning, but he is expected back before long.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

And what sort of a book did you get from him?

FATHER VASSILY.

Ah, it's a work by Mister Renan, so to speak, "The Life of Jesus."

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

Is that so? Is this the kind of books you read?

FATHER VASSILY.

(Lighting a cigarette in confusion.) It's Nikolay Ivanovitch, he gave it to me to read.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

(Contemptuously.) Nikolay Ivanovitch gave it to you to read, indeed. Well, and do you agree with Nikolay Ivanovitch and with Mister Renan?

FATHER VASSILY.

Of course, I do not. If I did, so to speak, I could not be, so to speak, a servant of the church.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

And if, as you say, you are a faithful servant of the church, why don't you convince Nikolay Ivanovitch?

FATHER VASSILY.

Every person, I might say, has his own ideas on these subjects, and Nikolay Ivanovitch, I might say, has a great deal to say that is perfectly correct, but his principal error, I might say, is in relation to the church.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

(*Contemptuously.*) And what is that great deal that he says and that is correct? Is it correct and just, in accordance with the Sermon on the Mount, to give away your estate to strangers and to make paupers out of your own family?

FATHER VASSILY.

The church sanctifies, so to speak, the family, and the Fathers of the Church, so to speak, gave their blessing to the family relation, but the supreme perfection demands, so to speak, a renunciation of earthly goods.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Yes, that's what the martyrs did, but common mortals, I think, must act simply as befits any good Christian.

FATHER VASSILY.

No one can know what he is called to.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

But you are married, of course?

FATHER VASSILY.

Certainly.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

And you have children?

FATHER VASSILY.

Two of them.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Then why don't you renounce earthly goods and why do you smoke cigarettes?

FATHER VASSILY.

A weakness of mine, I might say, a sign of my unworthiness.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

I see that instead of reasoning with Nikolay Ivanovitch you are encouraging him. That's not right, let me frankly tell you so.

(Enter NURSE.)

NURSE.

Nikol'-ushka*) is crying and you don't even hear him. It's time to feed the child.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

I'm on my way. (Rises, exit.)

*) Diminutive for Nikolay.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

I am so terribly sorry for my sister. I see that she is much distressed. It's no joke to have the cares of a household. Seven children including a little baby. There is something wrong here, I'm sure. (*Pointing to her head.*) And I ask you: what sort of a newfangled religion have you found?

FATHER VASSILY.

I don't understand, so to speak.....

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Please drop beating about the bush. You know very well what I mean.

FATHER VASSILY.

But permit me.....

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

I ask you what sort of a faith is it that teaches that we must shake hands with every peasant, let them cut down our trees, hand them over money to buy liquor with and pauperize our own family?

FATHER VASSILY.

I don't know a thing about that.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

He says that's Christianity, and you are a priest of the Orthodox Church, so you must know and must tell me whether Christianity commands us to encourage stealing.

FATHER VASSILY.

But I....

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

What are you a priest for, with a cassock and long hair?

FATHER VASSILY.

But nobody asks us....

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Is that so? Well, I do. He said to me last night, the Gospel commands us 'Give to him who asks of thee.' In what sense is that to be understood?

FATHER VASSILY.

I think in its clear sense.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

And I don't think so, but as we were taught that God has appointed his own to every man.

FATHER VASSILY.

Of course, but...

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

I see that you are on his side, just as I was told. And that's downright bad, let me tell you. If some school teacher or some youngster encouraged him, that would not be so bad, but a man of your calling must remember the responsibility that rests upon him...

FATHER VASSILY.

I am trying...

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

What sort of a religion is it if he never goes to church and denies the sacraments? And instead of reasoning with him, you read Renan with him and try to put your own interpretation upon the Gospel.

FATHER VASSILY.

(*In agitation.*) I cannot answer, I am, so to speak, astounded, and preserve silence.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Ah, if I only were the Bishop, I'd teach you to read Renan and smoke cigarettes.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

Mais cessez au nom du ciel... De quel droit...?)*

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Please, don't try to teach me. I am convinced that the Father is not angry with me. What harm if I've spoken my mind fully? It would have been worse if I had kept it in. Am I not right?

FATHER VASSILY.

Pardon me if I have not expressed myself as I ought, pardon me. (*An embarrassed pause.*)

*) But stop in Heaven's name. By what right?

(Enter LYUBA and LISANKA. LYUBA, pretty, energetic, twenty years old, a daughter of MARIA IVANOVNA, LISANKA, a little older, daughter of ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA. They have baskets in their hands, their heads are wrapped in shawls, they are going mushrooming. They shake hands with those present.)

LYUBA.

Where is mama?

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

She has just gone to look after the baby.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

Be sure to bring back plenty of mushrooms. A little girl had picked some beauties, white and big. I would go with you, but it's too hot.

LISANKA.

Come with us anyway, papa.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Go with them, go with them, you're getting too fat.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

All right, let me fetch some cigarettes first, though.

(Exit.)

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

And where are all the young folks?

LYUBA.

Stepa went to the station on his bicycle, Mitrofan Er-militch and papa went to town, the youngsters are playing croquet, and Vanya is on the porch fooling with the dogs.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Well, and did Stepá come to some decision?

LYUBA.

Yes, he is going to file his own application enlisting as a volunteer. Yesterday he was very impertinent to papa.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Why, it's very hard on him. *Il n'y a pas de patience qui tienne**). He must begin to live, and they tell the poor boy to go and plow.

LYUBA.

Papa did not say that. Papa merely said....

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

It makes no difference. But Stepá must begin his life, and whenever he makes a suggestion, he is told he's wrong. But there he comes in person.

(FATHER VASSILY steps aside and commences to read. STEPA approaching on a bicycle.)

*) No amount of patience could stand it.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

*Quand on parle du soleil, on en voit les rayons.**) We have just been talking of you. Lyuba says you have been rude to your father.

STEPA.

Not at all. There was nothing unusual. He told me his opinion, and I told him mine. I am not to blame if our opinions do not agree. But Lyuba does not know a thing and is bound to pass remarks.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

And what is the decision?

STEPA.

I don't know papa's decision, and I am afraid he does not know it very well himself. But I have decided for myself. I am going to enlist as a volunteer in the Horse Guards. It's only our family that invents difficulties, but the whole thing is very simple. I am through with school, and I must fulfil my military duty. To serve in an infantry regiment, with drunken and coarse superiors, is not a very pleasant prospect, and therefore I am enlisting in the Guards where I have friends.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

But why did not papa consent?

STEPA.

Papa! What's the use of talking to him? Under the influence of his *idée fixe* he cannot see a thing that he

*) Speak of the sun and you will see its rays.

does not want to see. He says that military service is the lowest form of servitude and that therefore no one should serve in the army, and for this reason he will not give me any money.

LISANKA.

Stepa, this is not what he said. I was present. He said if you absolutely must serve, be drafted, but to go as a volunteer means that you have chosen this service voluntarily.

STEPA.

But it's I who will serve and not he. And he served his time, didn't he?

LISANKA.

He does not say that he would not give you any money, but that he cannot participate in a cause which is against his convictions.

STEPA.

Convictions nonsense, I must serve and that's all.

LISANKA.

I only repeat what I heard him say.

STEPA.

I know, you agree with papa in everything.

LISANKA.

In everything that is right.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

I know well that Lisanka is on the side of all folly. She can scent where there is something silly. *Elle flaire cela de loin.**)

(Enter VANYA, *in a red shirt, running, with a telegram in his hands; he is followed by his dogs.*)

VANYA.

(To LYUBA.) Guess who is coming?

LYUBA.

What's the use of guessing? Give me the telegram.

(Stretches out her hand, VANYA avoids her.)

VANYA.

I won't give it to you, and what's more I won't tell you. It's from someone who will make you blush.

LYUBA.

Nonsense. Who is it from?

VANYA.

There she goes blushing! Who from? Aunt Alina, you guess.

*) She scents it from a distance.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

From Tcheremshanovs.

LYUBA.

Is that so?

VANYA.

Is that so, indeed! What made you blush?

LYUBA.

Auntie, show me the telegram. (*Reading.*) "Arriving by mail train three of us—Tcheremshanovs." That means the Princess, Boris and Tonya. Well, I shall be very pleased to see them.

VANYA.

Very pleased—Stepa, see how she's blushing.

STEPA.

Don't pester her. You're forever harping on the same tune.

VANYA.

I see... That must be because you're a little sweet on Tonya yourself? You better draw lots, sister and brother can't marry a brother and sister.

STEPA.

Let up on this fooling. Don't always try to tease. How often must I warn you?

LISANKA.

Well, if they are coming with the mail train, they ought to be here shortly.

LYUBA.

That's so, we had better not go mushrooming.

(Enter PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.)

LYUBA.

Uncle Petya, we've decided not to go.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

How is that?

LYUBA.

Tcheremshanovs are due here shortly. Let's instead play one more set of tennis. Will you play, Stepá?

STEPA.

I don't mind.

LYUBA.

Vanya and I against you and Lisanka. Agreed? I'll fetch the balls and get the youngsters together.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

And so I'm left in the lurch.

FATHER VASSILY.

(About to leave.) Good-bye.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

No, wait, Father, I should like to speak to you, and Nikolay Ivanovitch will be home shortly.

FATHER VASSILY.

(Sits down and lights another cigarette.) He might be delayed for some time yet.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

I hear somebody's carriage. Doubtless it's he.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

What Princess Tcheremshanova is this? Not the *née* Golitzine?

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Yes it is, the one who used to live in Rome with her aunt.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

I shall be certainly be glad to see her. I haven't seen her since those days in Rome when we used to sing duets together. She had a charming voice. I think she has two children?

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Yes, and she is bringing them along.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

I did not know they were so intimate with the Saryntzovs.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

I should hardly call this a close acquaintance, but last year they lived abroad together. And it seems to me *la princesse a des vues sur Lyuba pour son fils. C'est une fine mouche, elle flaire une jolie dot.**)

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

But the Tcheremshanovs used to be rich in their own right.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

They did, the prince is still living, but he squandered his whole fortune and drunk himself out of society. She appealed to the Tsar, and saving a few crumbs separated from him. But she gave her children a splendid education. *Il faut lui rendre cette justice***). The daughter is an excellent musician, the son graduated from the university and is very charming. Only Masha***) is a little displeased, I think, for guests are a little in the way just now. And here is Nikolay.

(Enter NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

How do you do, Alina, Pyotr Semenovitch. (Seeing FATHER VASSILY) Ah, Vassily Nikanorovitch. (Shakes hands.)

*) She has designs on Lyuba for her son. She scents a good dowry.

**) You must give her credit.

***) Maria Ivanovna.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

There is still some coffee left. Shall I give you a cup?
It is a bit cold, but I can have it warmed. (*Rings.*)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

No, thank you. I have had something to eat. And
where is Masha?

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

She is looking after the baby.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Is she feeling well?

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Fairly well. And have you arranged your affairs?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Yes, I have. Still, if you have some tea or coffee left,
I'll drink a cup. (*To FATHER VASSILY.*) So you've brought
back the book. Have you read it? I have been thinking
about you all the way.

(*Enter FOOTMAN, bowing; NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH offers him his hand. ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA exchanges glances with her husband and shrugs her shoulders.*)

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Please have the samovar warmed up.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Don't, Alina. I don't want any tea, and if I did, I would drink it cold.

(Enter MISSIE. *Seeing her father she comes running from the croquet ground into her father's arms and puts her arms about his neck.*)

MISSIE.

Papa, come with me.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(Caressing her.) Directly, directly, let me have a bite to eat. You go and play, I will be over directly.

(Exit MISSIE.)

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Did the sessions find the peasants guilty?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Yes, but they had admitted their guilt. (To FATHER VASSILY.) I fancy you found Renan somewhat unconvincing.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

But you did not consent to the verdict?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(Irritably.) Of course, I did not. (To FATHER VASSILY.) The chief problem for you is not in the divinity of Christ, nor in the history of Christianity, but in the Church.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

How was that? They pleaded guilty *et vous leur avez donné un dementi?**) They did not steal, but merely helped themselves.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(*Had started to converse with the priest, but turns around determinedly to ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.*) Alina, my dear, please don't pursue me with pinpricks and insinuations.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Nothing of the sort.....

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

But if you really want to know why I cannot go to law with peasants because of the timber which they needed and cut down.....

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

I think they need this samovar too....

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

And if you want me to tell you why I could not permit these people to be thrown into prison and to be ruined because they had chopped down ten trees in a forest which is reputed to be mine....

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Reputed so by everybody.

*) And you gave them a clean bill?

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

Those eternal arguments!

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Very well, granting for the sake of the argument something that I can never admit, granting that this forest is really mine, it gives me nine hundred dessyatin of forest preserve, there are five hundred trees to a dessyatin, which I think makes four hundred and fifty thousand trees, am I right? They have chopped down ten, that is one forty-five thousandth part; is it worth while, is it possible to tear a man away from his family because of that and to throw him into prison?

STEPA.

Well, if you do not exact retribution for this one forty-five-thousandth part, they will soon chop down the remaining forty-four-thousand ninehundred and ninety nine.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

But I say this for your aunt only, in reality I have no right to this forest. Land belongs to all, in other words it cannot belong to any one person. And we have spent no labor of any kind on this land.

STEPA.

You have saved, you have watched it.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

By what means have I effected my savings? And I surely have not watched the forest myself. Well, what's

the use? You cannot prove such things to a chap who is unconscious of a feeling of shame when beating a fellow creature.

STEPA.

No one is beating anybody.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Even so, if a man feels no shame in making use of the labor of others without toiling himself, it is impossible to prove to him the wrong of it, and the whole system of political economy which you studied in college is only designed to justify the condition in which we now find ourselves.

STEPA.

On the contrary, science destroys all preconceived notions.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

However, this is of very little consequence to me. What is of importance to me is the fact that I know that in Ephim's place I should have acted exactly as he did, and if after that I were put in jail, I should be in despair, and since I mean to do unto others as I would that others do unto me, I cannot prosecute him and must do everything in my power to have him released.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

STEPA.

(In unison.)

But in that case it's impossible to have any property. Then it's much more profitable to steal than to work. You never answer an argument. I say that he who has saved has a right to enjoy his savings.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(Smiling.) Well, I hardly know whom to answer first.
(To PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.) It is wrong to have property.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

And if it's wrong to have property, you cannot have clothes, or a loaf of bread, and you must give away everything, and therefore you cannot live.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

It is true, we cannot live the way we do.

STEPA.

In other words we must die? Therefore this doctrine is inappropriate to life.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

You're wrong, it was given to us explicitly so that we might live. Yes, we must give away everything. Not only give away the forest which we do not use and which we have never seen in its entirety, but we must give away our clothes and our bread.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

And the bread of the children?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

And the bread of the children, and we must not only give bread, but give ourselves also. Therein is all the teaching of Christ. We must employ every vestige of our strength in order to give ourselves.

STEPA.

That means we must die.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Yes, if you die for your friends, it is a wonderful thing not only for yourself but also for others. But the fact of the matter is that man is not spirit only, but a spirit dwelling in the flesh. And the flesh draws him to live for its sake, while the spirit of enlightenment draws him to live for God, for others; and the man's life is consequently not animal, but a sort of a compromise and the nearer it comes to being a life for God, the better it is. And therefore the more we try to live for God the better it is for us, and the animal existence will take care of itself.

STEPA.

But why a middle course, a compromise? If it be the right way to live, then it is best to give away everything and to die.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

And it would be beautiful. Try to do it and it will be well not only with you but also with others.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

No, this is obscure and involved. *C'est tiré par les cheveux.**)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

What can you do? It cannot be explained in words. Well, enough for the present.

STEPA.

You are right, enough of that, and I still fail to understand. (*Exit STEPA.*)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(*To FATHER VASSILY.*) And what impression did the book produce upon you?

FATHER VASSILY.

(*In agitation.*) What should I say? Well, the historical part has been worked out adequately, but it lacks conviction, or I might say authoritativeness, because I might say of insufficiency of data. Neither the divinity of Christ nor the contrary can be proved historically: there is one incontrovertible proof....

(*During the argument exeunt first the ladies, then PYOTR SEMENOVITCH, leaving FATHER VASSILY alone with NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.*)

*) It's far fetched.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

You mean the church?

FATHER VASSILY.

Of course, the church, the testimony, I might say, of trustworthy people, of saints, I might say.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Of course that would be fine, that is if we had such an infallible order of beings whom we could fully believe; it would be a very desirable thing to have one. But the fact that it would be desirable does not prove that it exists.

FATHER VASSILY.

And I believe that it does prove this very thing. How could the Lord expose his law, I might say, to a possibility of corruption or misinterpretation? He was bound to establish, I might say, a custodian of his truths preventing these truths from suffering corruption.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Very well; but you started out with the necessity of proving the truths themselves, and now you face the necessity of proving the truth of the custodianship of truths.

FATHER VASSILY.

Well, here we must have faith, I might say.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Have faith—sure enough, we cannot do without faith, but not to have faith in what others tell me, but have faith

in that to believe in which we are led by the processes of our thoughts, of our reason. Faith in God, in the true and eternal life.

FATHER VASSILY.

Reason might deceive us. Every man has a reason of his own.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(*Hotly.*) Here is a terrible blasphemy. God gives us one sacred instrument for the recognition of the truth, one only that can unite us all. And we have no faith in it!

FATHER VASSILY.

How can we have faith in it in the face of so much dissension?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Where is the dissension? Two times two are four; do not do unto others what you do not wish to have done to you; there is a cause for everything. These truths we acknowledge because they are in accord with our reason. But that God revealed Himself to Moses on Mount Sinai, or that Buddah soared heavenward on a ray of sunlight, or that Mohammed flew to heaven, or that Christ ascended to the same place,—in these and similar matters we are all apart in our opinions.

FATHER VASSILY.

No, we are not all apart, those of us who are in the truth, we are all united in the one faith in God and in Christ.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

No, even here we are not united, we are all apart. And why should I believe you more than a Buddhist lama? Just because I happened to be born in your faith?

(*Sounds of dispute among tennis players: "Out." "No, it wasn't out." VANYA: "I saw it myself." During the conversation servants have set the table again for coffee and tea.*)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

You say the church unites. But on the contrary, the most terrible disunion came from the church. "How often would I have gathered you, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings"...

FATHER VASSILY.

That was before Christ. Christ has gathered them together.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Christ indeed gathered them, but we separated them again, because we wrongly interpreted His words. He destroyed all churches.

FATHER VASSILY.

What does it mean then "Tell the Church"?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Words do not matter, and these words have no reference to the church as such. It is the spirit of the teaching that matters. The teaching of Christ is universal and in-

cludes all beliefs and excludes all that is exclusive—the resurrection and the divinity of Christ, sacraments, all things that disunite.

FATHER VASSILY.

That's your interpretation, I might say, of Christ's teaching, but Christ's teachings is all based upon His divinity and resurrection.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

That is the abomination of the churches. They divide people by asserting that they are the sole possessors of the complete, indubitable, infallible truth. "We and the Holy Ghost have deigned.." It commenced with the first Apostolic Council. From that time on they started to affirm that they were the possessors of the complete and *exclusive* truth. For if I say that there is a God, the universal principle, everybody will agree with me, and this recognition of God will unite us; but if I say that there is a God—Brahma, or a Hebrew God, or a Trinity—such a divinity will divide us. People would unite and for this purpose they invent all sorts of harmonizing media, but they neglect the one positive means of harmony—the striving for truth. It is as though they were in one enormous edifice, with the light falling through a skylight in the centre, and instead of them all going towards that light, they huddle uniting in little groups in various nooks and corners. But if they go towards the light, they would come together without any thought of union.

FATHER VASSILY.

But how would you guide the people without having, sc to speak, a determined specific truth?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

That is the horror of it. Each one of us must save his soul, must do the work of God for himself, and we worry about saving and teaching other people. And what is it that we teach them? It's terrible to think of it even. Now, at the close of the nineteenth century we teach them that God made the world in six days, then brought about a flood, then put all beasts into an ark, and we teach all the foolishness and filth of the Old Testament, and then that Christ commanded to baptize all with water, or we teach the belief in the absurd and vile doctrine of the redemption without which there is no salvation, and then that he flew up into heaven and sat down in a heaven which does not exist at the right hand of the Father. We have become accustomed to all this, but it is terrible just the same. An innocent child, receptive to goodness and truth, asks us what is the world and its law, and instead of revealing to him the teaching of love and truth which was handed down to us, we zealously cram his head with all sorts of horrifying absurdities and abominations ascribing them to God. Why, this is dreadful. This is a crime which surpasses all others perpetrated in the world. And we, and you with your church are the perpetrators of it. Forgive me.

FATHER VASSILY.

Of course, if you look upon the teaching of Christ from this rationalistic point of view, I might say, then this is so.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

No matter how you look at it, it is the same.

(Enter ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA. FATHER VASSILY is saying good-bye.)

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Good-bye, Father. Don't listen to him, he will lead you astray.

FATHER VASSILY.

No, prove the scriptures. The matter is too important to neglect, I might say.

(*Exit.*)

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Really, Nikolay, you have no pity on him. While he is a priest, he is a mere lad and can have no firm convictions, he has not yet grounded himself..

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

So he must be given time to become confirmed and hardened in fraud? I don't see why. And he is a good and a sincere man at that.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

What would become of him if he should believe you?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

He does not have to believe me, but if he saw the truth, it would be a great thing for him and also for everybody else.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

If it were a good thing, everybody would believe you, but as it is nobody believes you, and your own wife least of all. And she cannot believe you.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Who told you so?

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Then try to explain it to her. She will never understand, nor will I that we must take care of other people and neglect our own children. Explain this to Masha.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

And Masha will surely understand me. But forgive me, Alina, if I say that were it not for outside influences to which she is so apt to yield, she would understand me and go hand in hand with me.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Meaning that she would agree to disinherit her children for the benefit of drunken Ephim *et compagnie*?*) But as to your being angry with me, pardon me, only I cannot help speaking my mind.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I am not angry with you. On the contrary I am glad that you have had your say and give me an opportunity, or rather provoke me to express my own views fully. I had been thinking of it to-day while on my way home, and I will speak to her immediately, and you will see that she will agree with me because she is wise and good.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

As to that, permit me to entertain my doubts.

*) and Company.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I have no doubts. For this is not an invention of my own, but something we all have known all along, something that Christ revealed to us.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Well, in your opinion Christ revealed that, all right, only I think He revealed something else.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

There can be nothing else.

(Voices from the tennis court.)

LYUBA.

Out!

VANYA.

No, we didn't see it.

LISANKA.

I saw where it fell.

LYUBA.

Out! Out! Out!

VANYA.

That's an untruth!

LYUBA.

In the first place, it is not polite to say "that's an untruth."

VANYA.

And I think it is not polite to say an untruth.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Wait a moment, don't argue, but listen to me.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

I'm listening.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Is it true that we may die at any moment and go away into nothing or to God who demands that we live according to His will?

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Well?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

So what can I do in this life excepting that which is demanded of me by the supreme judge of my soul, my conscience, God? And my conscience, God, demands of me that I consider all people equal, loving them all, serving them all.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Including your own children.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Of course, including them, but I do what my conscience commands me. The first thing is to comprehend that my

life does not belong to me,—your life does not belong to you, but to God who sent us and who demands of us that we do His will.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

And you will convince Masha of this?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Positively.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

And she will stop educating her children as she ought and drop them? Never.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Not only will she—even you will understand that there is nothing else to do.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Never!

(Enter MARIA IVANOVNA.)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Well, Masha, I hope I did not wake you up this morning.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

No, I was not sleeping. Did you have a good trip?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Yes, a very good one.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Why are you drinking cold tea? We must get some ready for the guests anyway. You know the Tcherem-shanovs are coming, mother, daughter and son.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Well, if they are agreeable to you, I am very pleased.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

I like her, and the young folks too. Only it's a somewhat inopportune time.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

(*Rising.*) Have a talk with him, and I'll go and watch them play tennis.

(*A pause. Suddenly they start speaking simultaneously.*)

MARIA IVANOVNA.

An inopportune time, because we must have a talk together.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I have just been telling Alina...

MARIA IVANOVNA.

What?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

No, you had better speak.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

I meant to speak to you about Stepa. Something must be decided. The poor fellow is worried, he does not know what will become of him. He came to me for advice but I cannot make any decision.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

What have you to decide? He can decide himself.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

You know he intends to enter the Guards as a volunteer, but he requires a certificate from you for that purpose, and he must have assurance of support, and you won't grant it. *(Agitated.)*

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Masha, in the name of God, don't get excited, but listen to me. It is not that I give or refuse to give anything. I consider entering upon military service either an absurd, insane act, characteristic of a savage who does not understand the vileness of that business, or a piece of rascality if it is done with design.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Everything is savage and absurd in your own eyes now, but he must live. You lived once.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(Hotly.) I lived so when I did not understand, before anybody had told me, and we are not concerned with me, but with him.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Of course with you,—you are the one who is refusing the money.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

I cannot give that which does not belong to me.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

How is that, how does it not belong to you?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

The products of other people's labor do not belong to me. The money that I would give him would be taken away from others. I have no right to do it, I cannot do it. While I am the manager of the estate I cannot dispose of it contrary to the dictates of my conscience. I cannot take the toil of peasants who are working with the last vestige of their strength and have them used for debauches in the Horse Guards. Take the estate from me, and then I shall not be responsible.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

You know that I will not, cannot do this. I must bring up the children and nurse them—I bore them. It's cruel.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Masha, dear, That is not the point. When you started to speak I had also started and I had intended to have a soul to soul talk with you. We cannot go on like this. We are living together without understanding one another. It

seems at times as though we deliberately misunderstood one another.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

I want to understand you, but I do not, I do not understand you. I don't understand what has come over you.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Well, learn to understand then. While now is hardly the proper time, God only knows when that may come. Do not try so much to understand me, understand yourself, your own life. It is impossible to keep on living without knowing why we live.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

But we have lived so, and we have lived very well.
(Noticing an expression of annoyance on his face.) Very well, I am listening.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Well, I also did live so, as you have expressed it, that it without giving thought why I lived, but a time came and I was horrified. Very well, we live by the toil of others, forcing others to work for us, bearing children and educating them for the same life. Old age will come, death, and I will ask myself: "Why have I lived?" In order to multiply parasites after my own kind? And the worst of it is —it is not a merry life to lead. It is bearable while you are bristling with abundance of life like Vanya here....

MARIA IVANOVNA.

But everybody lives like that.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

And everybody is unhappy.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Not a bit of it.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Well, I at least found that I was terribly unhappy and was making you and the children unhappy, and I asked myself: Can it be that God created us for this? And the moment I thought of it, I felt sure that the answer was no. I asked myself: Why, then, did God create us?

(Enter FOOTMAN.)

MARIA IVANOVNA.

(Without listening to her husband and turning to the FOOTMAN.) Bring me some hot cream.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

And in the Gospel I have found the answer, namely that we do not live for our own selves. It was very plainly revealed to me when I began to ponder over the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. Do you know it?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Yes, I know, it's something about laborers.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

This parable for some reason or other has shown me more clearly than anything else where I had been in error,

Just as the laborers in the vineyard thought that the vineyard was their property I used to imagine that my life belonged to me, and everything seemed so dreadful; but the moment I realized that my life was not my own. that I was sent into the world in order to do the work of God...

MARIA IVANOVNA.

That's something we have always known.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Well, if we have always known it, we cannot continue to live as we are living, since our whole life is not only a failure to accomplish His will, but a continuous violation of it.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

How do you make that out, if we live without harming anybody?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

And how are we not harming anybody? That's understanding life in accordance with the ideas of the laborers in the vineyard. Are we not....

MARIA IVANOVNA.

I know that parable. Well, He gave them share and share alike.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(*After a pause.*) No, that is not it. But one thing, Masha, just think—we have only one life to live, and we can either live it holy or ruin it.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

I cannot think and argue. I lie awake nights and nurse the baby and carry on the household and instead of helping me you are telling me things I don't understand.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Masha!

MARIA IVANOVNA.

And now these guests too.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

No, we'll have another talk till we understand one another. (*Kisses her.*) All right?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Very well, only you must be as you used to be.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

That I cannot. But listen..

(*The tinkling of carriage bells and the sounds of an approaching carriage.*)

MARIA IVANOVNA.

I have no time now, they have arrived. I will go out to meet them.

(*Walks out and around the corner of the house. STEPA and LYUBA are seen going in the same direction.*)

VANYA.

(*Leaping over a bench.*) I'm not giving it up. We'll finish the set. Lyuba, how about it now?

LYUBA.

(*Solemnly.*) No nonsense, now please.

(*ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA and her husband, as well as LISANKA, enter upon the veranda. NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH is pacing musingly.*)

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Well, have you convinced her?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Alina, that which is passing between us is a very grave business, and jokes are out of place. It is not I who convince, but the life, the truth, God—that's who does the convincing, and therefore it is impossible for her not to be convinced, if not to-day, then to-morrow, if not to-morrow, then.. It's awful though that no one ever seems to have any time. Who are the guests?

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

Tcheremshanovs. Catiche Tcheremshanova, whom I have not seen in eighteen years. The last time I saw her we sang together "*La ci darem la mano.*" (Sings.)

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

(*To her husband.*) Please do not interrupt, and don't run away with the idea that I and Nikolay are quarreling. I

am merely telling the truth. (*To NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.*) I am not laughing a bit, but it seemed strange to me that you should have undertaken to convince Masha at the very moment she had made up her mind to speak to you.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

All right, all right. Here they come. Tell Masha please that I will be in my own room. (*Exit.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A week later. SARYNTSOV's country house. Scene represents a large drawing room. Samovar, coffee and tea service on cloth-covered table. Near the wall a grand piano, a music cabinet. At the table, seated, MARIA IVANOVNA, PRINCESS TCHEREMSHANOVA and PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

Yes, Princess. It does not seem so long since you played Rosina while I... And now, I'm not even fit to play Don Basilio.

PRINCESS.

It would have been something for our children to sing, only the times have changed.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

Yes, the young people to-day are matter-of-fact. But your young Princess I hear is a serious and an excellent musician. Are they still asleep?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

They had a horseback ride by moonlight last night, and

returned very late. I was up attending to baby and heard them.

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

And when will my better half return? Have you sent for her?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Yes, they left very early. She ought to be back soon.

PRINCESS.

Can it be that Alexandra Ivanovna went away merely to get Father Gerasim?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Yes, the idea came to her yesterday and she did not waste any time about it.

PRINCESS.

Quelle energie, je l'admire.)*

PYOTR SEMENOVITCH.

Oh, *pour ceci, ce n'est pas ce qui nous manque.***)
(*Produces a cigar.*) However, I'll go out for a smoke, and will take a walk in the park with the dogs until the young folks get up. (*Exit.*)

PRINCESS.

I don't know, dear Maria Ivanovna, but it seems to

*) What energy; I admire her.

**) As for that, we don't lack that.

me that you take these things too much to heart. I understand him. That is a sort of a lofty mood. Well, what if he gives things to the poor? We are apt to give too much thought to our own self anyway.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

If he limited himself to that, but you don't know him, you don't know all. It is not merely helping the poor, it is an entire upheaval, the destruction of everything.

PRINCESS.

I am not trying to pry into your family life, but if you permit me...

MARIA IVANOVNA.

No, I consider you one of the family, particularly now...

PRINCESS.

I would advise you to state your demands to him frankly and positively and to enter into some sort of an understanding with him as to the limits.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

(*In agitation.*) There are no limits. He wants to give away everything. He wants me, at my time of life, to become a cook and a washerwoman.

PRINCESS.

Impossible. It's really remarkable.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

(*Picks up a letter.*) We are now alone, and I'll gladly tell you all. He wrote me a letter yesterday. I'll read it to you.

PRINCESS.

What? He lives in the same house with you and writes you letters? How very queer!

MARIA IVANOVNA.

No, I can understand that. He is so agitated when he speaks. Lately I have been worried about his health.

PRINCESS.

And what does he write?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Listen: (*Reading.*) "You reproach me with destroying our former mode of life without substituting anything new for it, you say that I do not mention how we are to arrange our family life. When we begin to talk, we are apt to become excited, and therefore I write you. Why I cannot continue to live as I used to live, I have told you many times, and I am not able to convince you in a letter that it was not the right kind of life to live, but that we must lead a Christian life. You can do one of two things: either have faith in the truth and follow me, or trust me and give yourself to me on trust—and still follow me." (*She interrupts her reading.*) I can do neither the one nor the other. I do not believe that we must live the way he wants to, I am sorry for the children and I cannot trust

myself to him. (*She reads.*) "This is my plan: we will give all our lands to the peasants, leaving to ourselves about fifty dessyatins, and the whole garden and the orchard and the pasture meadow. We will try to do our own work, but will force neither ourselves nor the children. That which we will leave to ourselves ought to yield us five hundred roubles."

PRINCESS.

To live with a family of seven children on five hundred roubles is impossible.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

So this is the whole plan, besides we are to give up the house for school purposes and live in the gardener's lodge which consists of two rooms.

PRINCESS.

I begin to believe that this is something pathological. And what did you reply?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

I told him I could not. That if I were alone, I would follow him anywhere, but with children.... Just think I am nursing Nikolenka myself. I said to him: We cannot break up just like that. Is that what I married for? I am old and weak now. I have borne and brought up nine children.

PRINCESS.

I never imagined that he would go so far.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

And this is how it stands. I dare not think what will become of us. Yesterday he remitted the lease rental to the Dmitrovka peasants and he intends to give them a quit-claim for the land.

PRINCESS.

I think you ought not to permit it. You must protect your children. If he cannot own the estate, let him give it to you.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

But I don't want that.

PRINCESS.

You must do it for the sake of the children. Let him transfer the estate to your name.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

My sister Sasha told him to do so, but he said he had no right to do it, that the land belonged to those who work on it, and that it was his duty to give it to the peasants.

PRINCESS.

I begin to see that it is far more serious than I had fancied.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

And our parish priest, our own parish priest is on his side.

PRINCESS.

I noticed it last night.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

So my sister went to Moscow to see a notary and particularly to bring back with her Father Gerasim in order to reason with him.

PRINCESS.

No, I do not think that Christianity means to ruin your own family.

(Enter NURSE.)

NURSE.

Please, ma'am, Nikolenka is calling for you, he is awake.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

I'm on my way. I am so upset, and the poor child has a pain in the stomach. I'm coming, I'm coming.

(Enter NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH *through another door, with a document in his hands.*)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

No, it's impossible.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

What is it?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Pyotr is being thrown into prison on account of some pine tree that is supposed to be our property.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

How is that?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Just like this: he chopped it down, a complaint was made to the justice of the peace, and he sentenced him to three months in jail. His wife has been here to see me.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Well, can anything be done now?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Not now any more. The only thing I can do is to own no forests. And I shall own none. But what's to be done now? I'll go and see if I cannot undo the harm that has been done.

(Walking out to the porch meets BORIS and LYUBA.)

LYUBA.

Good morning, papa. *(Kisses him.)* Where are you going?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I've just come from the village and I'm on my way back there again. They're dragging a starving man off to prison just because....

LYUBA.

That must be Pyotr.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Yes, it's Pyotr.

(Exit, followed by MARIA IVANOVNA.)

LYUBA.

(Sits down near the samovar.) Will you have coffee or tea?

BORIS.

I don't care which.

LYUBA.

He's forever harping on the same string. There is no end to it.

BORIS.

I don't understand him. I know that the people are poor and ignorant, and need help, but encouraging thieves is not helping.

LYUBA.

How would you help?

BORIS.

With our entire activity. We can offer all we know to the service of the people, but we must not give up our life.

LYUBA.

And papa says that's the very thing we must do.

BORIS.

I don't understand that. We can serve the people without ruining our lives. That is the way I would arrange my life. If you only....

LYUBA.

I want the thing you want and I fear nothing.

BORIS.

And these earrings? And these dresses?

LYUBA.

We can sell the earrings, and have a different dress perhaps, but neither is there any need to look like a fright.

BORIS.

I should like to have a talk with him. Do you think it would annoy him if I were to go down to the village to see him?

LYUBA.

Not a bit, I am sure he likes you. Didn't he continually single you out in his conversation last night?

BORIS.

(Finishing his coffee.) Then I'll go.

LYUBA.

All right, go, and I'll wake Lisanka and Tonya.

(Exeunt.)

CURTAIN.

SCENE II.

Village street, IVAN ZYABREV, a peasant, lying on the ground near a peasant hut covered with a sheepskin coat.

IVAN.

Malashka!

(A tiny little girl emerges from behind the hut—carrying a wailing baby in her arms.)

IVAN.

Fetch me some water. I want to drink.

(MALASHKA dives into the hut, the baby's crying is heard from inside, she comes out again with a cupful of water.)

IVAN.

You're forever beating the youngster, that's why he bawls all the time. Wait, I'll tell your mother on you.

MALASHKA.

Go ahead, tell her. He is hungry, that's why he's bawling.

IVAN.

(Drinking.) Why don't you ask Demkins for some milk?

MALASHKA.

I did, they have none to spare, and there is no one at home.

IVAN.

Ah, if only Death came quickly! Did they ring the noon bell?

MALASHKA.

Loud enough. They sure did. And here comes the Master.

(Enter NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Why did you come out here?

IVAN.

It's full of flies inside, and too stuffy.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Do you feel warmer now?

IVAN.

I'm all burning up on the inside.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

And where is Pyotr? Is he at home?

IVAN.

At home? This hour of the day? He went to the fields for sheaves.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I was told he was taken to jail.

IVAN.

Yes. The constable went to the fields after him.

(Enter PEASANT WOMAN, with child, carrying a sheaf of oats and a pitchfork; she immediately hits Malashka a blow on the back of the head.)

PEASANT WOMAN.

Why did you leave the baby? Can't you hear him bawling? Always trying to sneak out into the street.

MALASHKA.

(Screaming.) I only just came out, daddy wanted a drink of water.

PEASANT WOMAN.

I'll teach you. *(Seeing the Master.)* Good day, sir, Nikolay Ivanovitch, little Father. It's a hard life. I'm all worn out running the whole thing. Here they take my

only laborer to jail, and this good-for-nothing is loafing around here.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

What are you saying? He is sick.

PEASANT WOMAN.

He is sick, and what about me? The moment there's work to be done, he's sick, but to carouse and to pull my hair, then he is not sick. Let him croak like the dog that he is, what do I care?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

What a sin to talk like that!

PEASANT WOMAN.

I know it's a sin, but my heart is full. I'm heavy with child, and I have to do two men's work. Others are all finished, and we've two fields unmowed. I ought to be binding, but no, I must get back home to look after the children.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I'll see that your oats are cut, I'll hire someone, and have the binding done for you too.

PEASANT WOMAN.

As to the binding, I'll manage that myself, if only we had the mowing over with. And what do you think, Nikolay Ivanovitch, will he die on me, d'you think? He's in a bad shape.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I don't know. He looks to be in bad shape. I think it's best to take him to the hospital.

PEASANT WOMAN.

O, Lord, no. (*Wailing.*) Don't have him taken away, let him die here. What do you say?

IVAN.

I want to go to the hospital. It's not fit for a dog here.

PEASANT WOMAN.

Well, I don't know what to do. I'm going crazy. Malashka, get dinner.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

And what have you got for dinner?

PEASANT WOMAN.

Why, potatoes and bread, what else? But we hardly feel like eating.

(Disappears into the hut. Sounds of squealing pigs and screaming children proceed from the inside.)

IVAN.

(Groaning.) Lord, send me death.

(Enter BORIS.)

BORIS.

Can I be of any use to you?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

It is impossible to be of any use to any one here. The evil is too strongly rooted. We can only be of use to our own selves by seeing whereon we have built our happiness. Here is a family—five children, the mother expects another child, the father sick, they have nothing to eat but potatoes, and now the problem is being decided—shall they starve next year or not? It is impossible to help. How can they be helped? I'll hire a laborer for her. And who is the laborer? Another such peasant who has dropped his own homestead because of drunkenness or need.

BORIS.

Pardon me, but what are you doing here then?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I am trying to learn my own condition, I am discovering who it is that keeps our garden in order, builds our houses, makes our clothing, feeds and clothes us.

(Several peasants with scythes and women with pitchforks pass by, bowing.)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(Stopping one. Yermil, will you hire yourself out to cut and bind for them?)

YERMIL.

(Shaking his head.) I would, if I could, but I can't, my

own isn't in yet, we are rushing to get it in. What's the matter with Ivan? Is he dying?

ANOTHER PEASANT.

Here's uncle Sevastyan, perhaps he might do it. Grandpa Sevastyan, they're looking to hire a man to do mowing.

SEVASTYAN.

Hire yourself out. Nowadays one day's work means a year's eats. (*Passes on.*)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Look at them—half starved, living on bread and water, ill, many of them aged; there an old man with a rupture, from which he is actually suffering tortures, and yet he works from four o'clock in the morning until ten at night and is barely alive. And we? Is it possible, after realizing all this, to keep on living quietly, considering ourselves Christians? I won't even say Christians, but anything short of brutes?

BORIS.

But what is to be done?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Refuse to take part in this evil, to own land, to devour their labor. But how to arrange this, I don't know. The principal thing.... at least so it was with me.. I used to live without understanding that I am a son of God and that we all are the sons of God and brothers. But when I realized this I understood that all have equal rights to

life, and then there was an upheaval in my life. However, I cannot now explain this to you. I may only say one thing: whereas I once was blind, just as the folks at home are blind, now my eyes have been opened and I cannot help seeing. And seeing, I cannot continue to live like this. However, I'll speak to you later about that. Now I have to do what I can.

(*Enter CONSTABLE, PYOTR, his WIFE, and SON.*)

PYOTR.

(*Sinks to the feet of NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.*) Forgive me, in the name of Christ, it means my ruin. How can the women get through with the work? If you only give bail for me.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(*To the CONSTABLE.*) I'll go and write about it. Can't you leave him now?

CONSTABLE.

I was ordered to deliver him to the station.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

You go, I'll hire help and do what I can. Why this comes right down to me. How can I live like this?

(*Exit.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE III.

Rainy day in the country. Drawing room of SARYNTZOV's country house. TONYA has just finished playing a Schumann sonata and is still seated at the piano. STEPA is standing near the piano. BORIS is sitting. LYUBA, LISANKA, MITROFAN ERMILITCH (VANYA's tutor), FATHER VASSILY. All are enthralled by TONYA's playing.

LYUBA.

How beautiful was the Andante.

STEPA.

No, the Scherzo was still more beautiful. However, it was all charming.

LISANKA.

Very good.

STEPA.

I never suspected that you were such an accomplished artiste. This is truly masterful playing. It is plain to be seen that difficulties exist for you no more and that you think only of the expression, and your expression is so marvelously fine.

LYUBA.

And lofty.

TONYA.

But I feel that it is not at all what I want.. It lacks so much.

LISANKA.

How could it be better? It's wonderful.

LYUBA.

Schumann is fine, but I think Chopin grips the heart more.

STEPA.

He is more lyric.

TONYA.

You can hardly make such a comparison.

LYUBA.

Do you remember that prelude?

TONYA.

The so-called Georges Sand? (*She plays the initial bars.*)

LYUBA.

No, not that one. It's beautiful, but so hackneyed. But play it anyway, please.

(TONYA tries to play, but stops short.)

LYUBA.

No, the one in D minor.

TONYA.

Ah that one, that's a wonderful piece. It's something elemental, pre-creational.

STEPA.

(Laughs.) Just so. But play it, please. Though you must be tired. And we have certainly spent a wonderful morning thanks to you.

TONYA.

(Rises and looks through the window.) Those peasants again.

LYUBA.

That's what makes music so wonderful. I understand Saul. I am not possessed of an evil spirit, but I can understand him. No art can make you forget all things as much as music. (Crosses to the window.) Whom do you want?

► PEASANTS.

We've been sent to see Nikolay Ivanovitch.

LYUBA.

He is not here. Wait awhile.

TONYA.

And you are marrying a man who does not understand a thing of music.

LYUBA.

You don't say....

BORIS.

(*Absently.*) Music... No, I love music, or rather I don't love it. I prefer something simpler, I like singing.

TONYA.

But is not this sonata beautiful?

BORIS.

The main thing is that it is not important, and I feel sorry for the lives of others in view of the importance that is attributed to it.

(*The guests sample the bonbons on the table.*)

LISANKA.

Is it not great to have your future husband and plenty of bonbons?

BORIS.

Well, I am not to blame for that, mama is responsible.

TONYA.

And it's very nice of her.

LYUBA.

Music is precious because it overwhelms you, grips

you, carries you out of the reality. See how gloomy everything had been, and the moment you started playing, a radiance came over the scene. It actually cleared up.

LISANKA.

And Chopin's valses are hackneyed, but still..

TONYA.

Here is one... (*Playing.*)

(Enter NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH, *shakes hands with* BORIS, TONYA, STEPA, LISANKA, LYUBA, MITROFAN ERMILITCH *and* FATHER VASSILY.)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Where is mama?

LYUBA.

I think she is in the nursery.

(STEPA *rings for the Footman.*)

LYUBA.

Papa, how wonderfully Tonya plays the piano. And where have you been?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

In the village.

(Enter FOOTMAN.)

STEPA.

!Bring another samovar.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(*Salutes the Footman, offering him his hand.*) How do you do?

(*Exit the Footman in embarrassment.*
Exit NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.)

STEPA.

Poor Afanasi, he is terribly embarrassed. I don't understand it. As though we were to blame for anything.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(*Re-enters.*) I had intended to go to my own quarters without expressing what passed through my mind. But I thought even that would be wrong. (*To TONYA.*) If you, as a guest, should feel offended by my words, please pardon me, but I must speak my mind. You say, Lyuba, that the Princess plays the piano so wonderfully. There are seven or eight of you here, all young men and women in the best of health; you slept until ten o'clock this morning, you have eaten and drunk, you are eating still, you are making music and discussing it; but there where I have just come from they have been on their feet since three o'clock in the morning, others have not slept a wink, having passed all night out in the open on a night job, old and sick and feeble, children and women—some of these with babies to nurse or about to give birth to a child, working to the last shred of their strength so that we might spend the fruit of their labor. And not enough of that—now, at this very

moment, the only provider for a family, their last worker, is being dragged to prison because he had this spring chopped down one out of a hundred thousand pine trees in a forest that is alleged to be mine. And here we are, washed clean and dressed up, having left ungathered our own offal in our bedrooms to the care of slaves, eating, drinking, arguing about Schumann and Chopin, which of them can move us more, can dispel our boredom better. This was in my mind as I walked past you and therefore I tell you about it. Think a moment, can we live like this? (*Stops in agitation.*)

LISANKA.

That's true; that's true.

LYUBA.

If we think so, we can't live.

STEPA.

Why not? I don't see why we cannot talk about Schumann just because people are poor. One does not exclude the other. If people...

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(*Angrily.*) If a man has no heart, if he is a block of wood...

STEPA.

All right, I'll keep quiet.

TONYA.

It is a terrible problem, the problem of our present day. We must not fear it, but look straight in the eyes of reality so that we may solve the problem.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

There is no time to wait for a solution of the problem as the result of general measures. Every one of us may die to-day or to-morrow. How can I live without suffering an inner struggle?

BORIS.

Of course, there is only one means: to take no part in it.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Well forgive me, if I have hurt your feelings. I could not refrain from expressing my feelings. (*Exit.*)

STEPA.

How can we take no part in it? Our whole life is bound up in it.

BORIS.

That is why he says that first of all we must own no property, change our whole mode of existence; live so as not to make others serve us, but serve others.

TONYA.

I see you have gone over to Nikolay Ivanovitch entirely.

BORIS.

I have just begun to understand him. And then what I have seen in the village! We must take off the spectacles through which we look at the life of the people, we must realize the connection between their sufferings and our pleasures, and then it's all finished.

MITROFAN ERMILITCH.

Yes, but the remedy is not in ruining your own life.

STEPA.

It's remarkable how Mitrofan Ermilitch and I look at things from two opposite points of view and yet agree—these are my very words: we must not ruin our own life.

BORIS.

Naturally. Both of you desire to live pleasantly, and for this reason are anxious to maintain an order of life which would assure this pleasantness. (To STEPA.) You wish to retain the present system, and Mitrofan Ermilitch wants to introduce a new one.

(LYUBA and TONYA exchange whispers.
TONYA walks over to the piano and plays a Chopin Nocturne. All quiet down.)

STEPA.

That's great. It solves everything.

BORIS.

It obscures and postpones everything.

(During the playing enter MARIA IVANOVNA and the PRINCESS, sit down and listen to the music. As the Nocturne nears its end, they hear the sound of harness bells outside.)

LYUBA.

It's Auntie. I'll go out to meet her.

(The playing continues. Enter ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA and FATHER GERASIM, a priest with a large cross on his breast, also a NOTARY. All rise to the their feet.)

FATHER GERASIM.

Please continue. It's very nice.

(PRINCESS comes forward to be blessed by FATHER GERASIM, followed by FATHER VASSILY.)

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

I did just as I said I would. I found Father Gerasim at home and coaxed him to come along. He is on his way to Kursk. And the notary is here also. He has the document ready, just waiting for the signature.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Will you not have some breakfast?

(The NOTARY lays some documents on the table and goes out.)

MARIA IVANOVNA.

I am very grateful to Father Gerasim.

FATHER GERASIM.

What could I do? It's out of my way, but I thought it my Christian duty to come.

(ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA *whispers something to the young folks. The latter after a consultation depart, excepting BORIS. FATHER VASSILY is also preparing to leave.*)

FATHER GERASIM.

Stay please, as a spiritual adviser you can both derive and do some good. Stay, if Maria Ivanovna has nothing against it.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

No, I am as fond of Father Vassily, as though he were a member of the family. And I have sought his advice, but being very young, he has little authority.

FATHER GERASIM.

Exactly so. Exactly so.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

(*Advancing to the group.*) So you see, Father Gerasim. You alone can help us and reason with him. He is a clever and a learned man, but you know that learning sometimes is harmful. He has suffered some sort of a mental eclipse. He affirms that in accordance with Christianity a man may have no property. Can that be right?

FATHER GERASIM.

It's fascination, intellectual pride, self-will. The Fathers of the Church have solved this problem adequately. But how did it all come about?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

How shall I tell you? When we were married, he was quite indifferent to religion, and so we lived and lived well for the first twenty years. Then he commenced to think. It may be that his sister or his reading had some influence upon him, but he commenced to think, to read the Gospel, and suddenly he became very religious; he started to go to church, to seek out monastics. And just as suddenly he dropped everything. He began to do his own work, forbade the servants to wait on him, and principally he commenced to give away his property. Yesterday he gave away a forest and some land. I am afraid of it, I have seven children to look after. Speak to him. I shall go and ask him if he would like to talk with you. (*Exit.*)

FATHER GERASIM.

Many are apostatizing nowadays. Whose is the property, his or the wife's?

PRINCESS.

It is his.

FATHER GERASIM.

And what is his rank?

PRINCESS.

Unimportant. A Major, I think. He had served in the army.

FATHER GERASIM.

Many stray in this fashion. There was a lady in Odessa carried away like this by spiritualism and she did a great deal of harm. Nevertheless God helped us to bring her back into the church.

PRINCESS.

The main thing, understand, is this. My son is about to marry his daughter. But the child is used to luxury and therefore must be safeguarded. She cannot be a total burden on my son. Though he is a hardworking man and a remarkably fine young fellow.

(Enter MARIA IVANOVNA and NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Good morning, Princess. How do you do, pardon me for asking your name and patronymic.

FATHER GERASIM.

Do you wish a blessing?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

No, I don't wish it.

FATHER GERASIM.

My name is Gerasim Feodorovitch. Very pleased to meet you.

(FOOTMAN brings in a tray with breakfast and a bottle of wine.)

FATHER GERASIM.

The weather is very pleasant and very suitable for reaping.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I presume that you have come at the invitation of Alexandra Ivanovna with the purpose of distracting me from my errors and of setting me in the right path. If that is so do not let us beat about the bush but proceed direct to business. I do not deny that I dissent from the teaching of the Church; I used to adhere to it and then I ceased. But with my whole soul I desire to be in the truth, and shall immediately accept it if you show it to me.

FATHER GERASIM.

How is it you say that you do not believe in the teaching of the church? What can a man believe in if not in the Church?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

In God and in His law as given us in the Gospel.

FATHER GERASIM.

This is the law which the Church teaches.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

If it did I should believe in it, but it teaches the contrary.

FATHER GERASIM.

The Church cannot teach anything contrary to it, because it was founded by the Lord Himself. It is written:

upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

That does not refer to the point at all. But even if I admitted that Christ had established a church, how shall I know that yours is that church?

FATHER GERASIM.

Inasmuch as it is said "where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

This again does not refer to the point and proves nothing at all.

FATHER GERASIM.

How can you deny the Church, when it alone has the means of grace?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

And I did not deny it until I became convinced that it supported everything that was contrary to Christianity.

FATHER GERASIM.

The Church cannot err for it alone guards the truth. Those err who have departed from it, but the Church is holy.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I told you before: I do not acknowledge this. I do

not acknowledge this for the Gospel says: "By their fruits shall ye know them." I have learned that the Church sets its blessing upon the swearing of oaths, upon killing, upon capital punishment.

FATHER GERASIM.

The Church recognizes and sanctifies authorities instituted of God.

(During the conversation STEPA, LYUBA, LISANKA, TONYA come in, take seats or stand about and listen.)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I know that not only does the Gospel say: "Thou shalt not kill." but goes further and says "Thou shalt not be angered," and yet the Church gives her blessing upon armies. The Gospel says: "Thou shalt not swear," but the Church administers oaths. The Gospel says.....

FATHER GERASIM.

Pardon me, Pilate said: "I adjure Thee by the living God" and Christ recognized the oath and said "I am He."

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

What are you talking about? Why it's downright ridiculous.

FATHER GERASIM.

That's the very reason that the Church does not sanction the individual interpretation of the Gospel so that the individual man might not be led astray, but as a mother

careth for her child, she gives them an interpretation in accordance with their strength. No, permit me to finish, the Church does not impose upon her children intolerable burdens, but demands the observance of the commandments: love, kill not, steal not, commit not adultery.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Just so, kill me not, steal not from me that which I have stolen. We have all of us robbed the people, we have stolen its land from it, and then we instituted a law, a law which forbids theft. And the Church sets her blessing upon all this.

FATHER GERASIM.

Seduction, intellectual pride speaks from your lips. You must subdue your haughty mind.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

But no, I ask you how under the law of Christianity am I to act when I recognize my sin in robbing the people, in enslaving it with regard to land? How am I to act? Am I to continue to own land enjoying the fruit of the labor of starving people, wasting it upon such things? (*Pointing to the Footman who has brought in luncheon and wine.*) Or shall I give it back to those who had been robbed of it by my ancestors?

FATHER GERASIM.

You must act as befits a son of the Church. You have a family, you have children, you must cherish them and bring them up as befit their station in life.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.**Why?****FATHER GERASIM.**

Because God has set you in a certain station in life. And if you would be benevolent, be benevolent, giving away part of what you have, visiting the poor.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Well, and how about the injunction to the rich young man who was told that a rich man cannot enter the kingdom of heaven?

FATHER GERASIM.

It is written "if thou wouldest be perfect."

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

And I want to be perfect. The Gospel says: "Be ye perfect, even as your Father who is in Heaven."

FATHER GERASIM.

This must also be understood in its proper connection.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

And I am trying to understand it so, and everything that is said in the Sermon on the Mount is simple and clear.

FATHER GERASIM.

Intellectual pride!

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

How do you make it intellectual pride, if it is said that the things that are hidden from the wise are revealed to infants?

FATHER GERASIM.

Revealed to the humble, not to the proud.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

But who is proud? I, who consider myself the same kind of a human being as everybody else, and therefore obliged to live like all others by my own labor, in the same necessitous condition as all my brothers, or those who consider themselves peculiar people, sacred, knowing all truth, incapable of erring and putting their own interpretation upon the words of Christ?

FATHER GERASIM.

(*Offended.*) Pardon me, Nikolay Ivanovitch, I have not come to dispute with you as to which of us is right, or to listen to any instructions, but at the request of Alexandra Ivanovna to have a talk with you. You know everything better than I and therefore I had best discontinue the conversation. Only for the last time in the name of God I call upon you: bethink yourself, you are under a cruel delusion and are ruining yourself. (*Rises.*)

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Will you not have something to eat?

FATHER GERASIM.

Thank you.

(*Exit with ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.*)

MARIA IVANOVNA.

(*To FATHER VASSILY.*) Well, what do you think now?

FATHER VASSILY.

Why, in my opinion Nikolay Ivanovitch said what was right while Father Gerasim failed to adduce any proofs.

PRINCESS.

He was not given a chance to speak, and moreover he did not like being drawn into some sort of a championship debate. Everybody was listening. He withdrew out of modesty.

BORIS.

No modesty whatsoever. Everything he said was false. It was so obvious that he had nothing to say.

PRINCESS.

I begin to see that in accordance with your accustomed shiftiness you have come to agree with Nikolay Ivanovitch in everything. If you harbor any such ideas, you have no right to marry.

BORIS.

I only say what is true, is true. I cannot speak differently.

PRINCESS.

You are the last man to talk like that.

BORIS.

Why?

PRINCESS.

Because you are poor and have nothing to give away. However, this is not our affair.

(*Exit, followed by all others excepting NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH and MARIA IVANOVNA.*)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(*Sits lost in thought, then smiles at himself.*) Masha, why was this done? Why did you invite this trifling, deluded man? Why should this blatant woman and this priest share in the most intimate secrets of our life? Can we not straighten out our affairs without such intervention?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

But what am I to do if you seek to leave the children without anything? I cannot bear this calmly. You know I am not covetous and that I need nothing for myself.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I know, I know, I believe it. But the trouble is that you do not believe in the truth—I know that you see it, but you cannot make up your mind to believe in it; you do not believe either in the truth or in me. But you do believe the mob—that princess and the others.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

I believe in you, I always have believed in you, but if you would make beggars out of the children...

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

This reveals your unbelief. You think that I had not struggled, had not feared? But afterwards I convinced myself that it was not only feasible, but a duty, that it was the one thing that was good and needful for the children. You always said that if it were not for the children, you would follow me, and I say that if it were not for the children, we could keep on living as we are living, we should be ruining ourselves alone, but as it is we are ruining them too.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

But what am I to do, if I don't understand?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

And how about me? I know why you sent for that wretched man with the cross, dressed up in priestly robes, and why Alina brought the notary. You would have me transfer the estate to your name. I cannot do it. You know that I have loved you these twenty years of our married life. I love you and desire your happiness, and for this reason I cannot sign it over to you. If I can sign it over to anybody, I can only do so in favor of the peasants from whom the land had been taken away. But otherwise I can't, I'm bound to give it back to them. And I am glad the notary is here, and I must do it.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

But this is dreadful. Why such cruelty? All right, you consider it a sin. But give it to me, anyway. (*Weeping.*)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

You don't know what you are saying. If I gave it to you, I could not remain living with you, I should have to go. I cannot continue to live in these conditions, I cannot see the life blood squeezed out of the peasants, I cannot see the peasants put into prison, though it be done in your name instead of mine. Make your choice.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

How cruel you are! What sort of Christianity do you call this? This is malice. I cannot live as you want me to. I cannot rob my children to give to somebody else. And for this you would abandon me? I see that you love me no longer, and I even know why.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Very well then, I'll sign. But Masha, you are demanding of me the impossible. You willed it so. I cannot live like this. (*Signs the document.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Scene is laid in Moscow. A large room, with a carpenter's bench, a desk with papers, a bookcase, mirror and a painting, with planks leaning against the furniture. NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH and a CABINET MAKER. NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH, wearing an apron, is working at the bench, the CABINET MAKER is planing.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(*Taking a board from the bench.*) Is it good so?

CABINET MAKER.

(*Adjusting the plane.*) Not so extra good. A little bolder, like this.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

A little bolder, indeed. Only I don't seem to get the knack of it.

CABINET MAKER.

But why bother with cabinet making, sir? There are so many of us about that we can hardly make a living.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(*Back to his work.*) It is a disgrace to live idly.

CABINET MAKER.

But that is the right thing for you. God gave you an estate.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

The trouble is I do not believe that God gave it to me, but people took it away from their own brothers.

CABINET MAKER.

(*Puzzled.*) That's so. But still you don't have to do this.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I can readily understand that it should puzzle you why in this house of plenty I should want to earn my living.

CABINET MAKER.

(*Laughing.*) Why, no, the gentry are known to take up all sorts of notions. Just use the plane on this.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

You will not believe me, you will laugh at me, but just the same let me tell you that I used to live like that without any shame, but now that I believe in the law of Christ, which tells me that we are all brothers, I am ashamed to live like that.

CABINET MAKER.

And if you are, then give it all away.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I wanted to, but I did not succeed, I had to turn it all over to my wife.

CABINET MAKER.

Why you couldn't do it, you're used to this life.

(*A voice from behind the closed door:*
"Papa, may I come in?")

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Come in, come in, you always may.

(*Enter LYUBA.*)

LYUBA.

How do you do, Yakov?

CABINET MAKER.

Good morning, Miss.

LYUBA.

Boris has gone to the regiment. I am afraid he may do or say something. What do you think?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

What can I think? He will follow the light that is in him.

LYUBA..

Why, this is dreadful! With the little time he has to serve, why suddenly rush to destruction?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

It was well that he did not come to see me; he knows that I cannot say anything different to him from that which he already knows. He told me himself he had resigned for the very reason that he realized that there is no activity more lawless, cruel and brutal than this military activity which is all built on slaughter, that there is nothing more degrading, nothing viler than to obey unconditionally the first chance superior in rank—he knows all this.

LYUBA..

That's just what I fear; he knows it and will do something.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

His conscience will decide this for him; the God that is within him. If he had come to me I should have given him this advice: to do nothing as the result of reasoning, but to act only when his whole being demanded it. There's nothing worse than the first. Look at me: I wanted to do as Christ commanded; to leave father, wife and children and to follow Him, and I almost did. And how did it end? It ended in my returning to live with you in the city, in the lap of luxury. Because I had tried to do something that was beyond my strength, I live now in this humiliating, absurd state. I want to live plainly, I want to work, and in these surroundings with flunkies and doormen, it becomes an affectation. Even now Yakov Nikanorovitch here is laughing at me.

CABINET MAKER.

Why should I laugh, sir? You are paying me, giving me tea to drink. I'm grateful.

LYUBA..

I wonder if I should not go after him?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Dear little girl, I know how hard and terrible it is for you, though it ought not to be terrible. I am a man who understands life. Nothing evil can come of it. That which seems evil only makes the heart rejoice. But understand only this one thing: the man who follows this path is confronted with a choice; and there are situations when the scales balance evenly between the things of God and those of the devil. And right here it is that God's greatest work is accomplished. And the intervention of any outsider is terribly perilous and harmful. It is as though a man strained every effort to master a burden, and the touch of a finger could break his back.

LYUBA..

But why suffer?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

It is as though a mother were to say: why suffer? There is no birth without pangs. It is the same in the spiritual life. I may say only this to you: Boris is a true Christian and therefore is free. And if you cannot be as he is, cannot believe in God as he does, believe in Him through him, believe in God.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

(From behind the door.) May I come in?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

You always may. What a reception I have here to-day!

(Enter MARIA IVANOVNA.)

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Our priest has arrived, our Vassily Nikanorovitch. He is on his way to the Bishop, he has resigned his parish.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

You don't say!

MARIA IVANOVNA.

He is here. Lyuba, call him. He wants to see you.

(Exit LYUBA.)

MARIA IVANOVNA.

And I wanted to talk to you about Vanya. He is behaving terribly and is paying no attention to his studies, so I am sure he will not be promoted. I commenced to talk to him, and he was very rude.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Masha, you know that I have no sympathy with the mode of life which you are leading and with your educational system. It is a dreadful problem to me whether I have the right to watch calmly while they are perishing in my plain sight.....

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Then give us something else, something definite, but what do you offer instead?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I cannot say what. I merely say one thing: In the first place give up this debasing luxury.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Let them be peasants? I cannot agree to that.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Then don't ask me. That which grieves you is the thing to do.

(Enter FATHER VASSILY and LYUBA.
FATHER VASSILY *embraces* NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Are you really through with it?

FATHER VASSILY.

I could not stand it any more.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I did not expect it so soon.

FATHER VASSILY.

I could not do otherwise. In my calling it is impossible to be indifferent. I have to hear confessions, to administer communion, and when I realized that all this was an error.....

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Well, what now?

FATHER VASSILY.

I am on my way to the Bishop for examination. I fear that I may be banished to the Solovetsky monastery. I had been thinking for a time to flee abroad, to ask your help, but I changed my mind. That would be pusillanimous. The only trouble is—my wife.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Where is she?

FATHER VASSILY.

She has gone to her old home. Mother-in-law was over and took the little boy away. That hurt.. I wanted so much..

(Pauses, restraining his tears.)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

God help you. Well then, are you stopping in our house?

PRINCESS.

(Rushing into the room.) It has come at last! He refused to take the oath and has been arrested. I have just been there and they would not let me see him. Nikolay Ivanovitch, go 'there, please.

LYUBA.

What? He refused? How do you know?

PRINCESS.

I was there in person. Vassily Andreyevitch told me

all about it. He is a member of the draft board. He went there and told them point-blank that he would not serve, would not take the oath, and all that sort of thing which Nikolay Ivanovitch had taught him.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Princess, can these things be taught?

PRINCESS.

I don't know, only this is not Christianity. Can this be Christianity? Tell him, Father!

FATHER VASSILY.

No longer "Father."

PRINCESS.

All right then, you're another of the same kind. And what sort of an accursed Christianity is this that makes people suffer and perish? I hate this Christianity of yours. You are safe, because you know no one can touch you. But I have an only son and you have ruined him.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Calm yourself, Princess.

PRINCESS.

You, you have ruined him. You have ruined him, now go and save him. Go, talk to him, induce him to drop all these follies. Rich people can afford such things, but not such as we.

LYUBA..

(Weeping.) Papa, what's to be done?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I'll go, perhaps I may be able to help. (*Takes off his apron.*)

PRINCESS.

(*Helping him with his clothes.*) I was not admitted, but let us go together. I'll succeed in seeing him.

(*Exeunt.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE II.

Office of the Draft Board. The CLERK of the Draft Board, alone, sitting at a desk. A SENTRY pacing up and down outside of the door which is facing the stage. Enter GENERAL and AIDE-DE-CAMP. CLERK jumps to his feet. SENTRY salutes.

GENERAL.

Where is the Colonel?

CLERK.

With the new recruit, your Excellency.

GENERAL.

Very well. Call him.

CLERK.

Yes, your Excellency.

GENERAL.

What is it you're copying, not the recruit's deposition by any chance?

CLERK.

It is, your Excellency.

GENERAL.

Let me see it.

(The CLERK hands the GENERAL the document. Exit.)

GENERAL.

(Offers the document to his AIDE-DE-CAMP.) Read it to me please.

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

(Reading.) "In reply to the questions submitted to me: (1) Why I don't take the oath. (2) Why I decline to comply with the requirements of the government. (3) What induced me to employ insulting words reflecting not only on the military class as a whole but also on the supreme authority, I answer as follows: to the first question, I do not take the oath because I confess the teaching of Christ. And in the teaching of Christ the taking of oaths is directly and definitely forbidden, as in Matthew's Gospel, V, 33-37, in the Epistle of St. James V, 12."

GENERAL.

He is putting up quite an argument, with an interpretation that is all his own.

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

(*Continuing to read.*) "It is written in the Gospel: 'Swear not at all. But let your word be yea, yea, nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of the devil.' And in St. James' Epistle: 'But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation.' But apart from the explicit injunction in the Gospel against swearing of oaths, even if there were no such injunction contained there, I could not swear to fulfil the will of people, since in accordance with the Christian law I must always fulfil the will of God which may not be in accord with human will."

GENERAL.

There's an argument for you! If they'd only listen to me, such things would not occur.

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

(*Reading.*) "And as to declining to comply with the requirements of people calling themselves the government. . ."

GENERAL.

The impudence of it!

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

"I decline to do so because these requirements are

criminal and wicked. They demand of me that I should enter the army and train myself and prepare myself to commit murder which is forbidden both by the Old and by the New Testaments and above all by my own conscience. In reply to the third question...."

(Enter COLONEL and CLERK. The GENERAL shakes hands with the COLONEL.)

COLONEL.

Are you reading the deposition, sir?

GENERAL.

Yes. Unpardonably impertinent remarks. Go ahead.

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

"as to what induced me to use insulting words in the room of the draft board, I answer that I was induced to use them by my desire to serve God, to expose the fraud which is being perpetrated in His name. And this desire I hope to retain to the hour of my death. And therefore..."

GENERAL.

That will do. I have no time to listen to any more of this drivel. The point is that we must eradicate this and prevent others from being corrupted. Have you had a talk with him?

COLONEL.

I have been talking with him all day long. I tried to appeal to his conscience, to convince him that it would be

only the worse for him, that he could not accomplish anything. I spoke of his family. He is very much worked up, but insists on his own views.

GENERAL.

It's too bad you have talked so much with him. We army people must act and not talk. Call him.

(*Exeunt AIDE-DE-CAMP and CLERK.*)

GENERAL.

(*Seating himself.*) No, Colonel, that's not the way. That's not the way to treat such lads. We must adopt decisive measures. One mangy sheep will spoil the whole herd. We cannot handle them with kid gloves. His being a prince, having a mother and a fiancée—we have nothing to do with such considerations. We have before us a soldier. And we must carry out the Imperial will.

COLONEL.

I only think that we could influence him more quickly by moral suasion.

GENERAL.

Not a bit of it. Resoluteness, only resoluteness. I have handled such. He must be made to feel that he is nothing, that he is but a grain of sand under the wheel of a wagon and cannot hold it back.

COLONEL.

We can try.

GENERAL.

(Hotly.) It is not a question of trying. I don't have to make experiments. I have served my Emperor for forty-four years, I have given my life to this service, I am still giving my life to it, and all of a sudden a mere stripling comes along and wants to teach me quoting theological texts to me. Let him argue with parsons, but as for me, there's only one thing or the other: soldier or prisoner. That's all.

(Enter BORIS, between two guards, followed by the AIDE-DE-CAMP and the CLERK.)

GENERAL.

(Pointing with his finger.) Put him there!

BORIS.

No use putting me anywhere. I will stand or sit where I please, because I do not acknowledge your authority over me!

GENERAL.

Shut up! You don't acknowledge my authority, eh? I'll make you.

BORIS.

(Sits down on a chair.) How wrong of you to bellow like this.

GENERAL.

Raise him up and make him stand.

(The soldiers raise BORIS.)

BORIS.

You have the power to do so. You have the power to kill me, but you can't make me obey.

GENERAL.

Shut up, I said. Listen, fellow, to what I am going to say to you.

BORIS.

I don't care at all to listen to what you wish to say to me, fellow.

GENERAL.

Why, he's crazy. He should be sent to the hospital for observation. There is nothing else left to do.

COLONEL.

We have been instructed to have him examined by the gendarmerie authorities.

GENERAL.

Very well, then, send him there. Only stick him in a uniform.

COLONEL.

He will not let them.

GENERAL.

Truss him up. (*To Boris.*) Listen to what I am saying to you. I don't care what becomes of you. But for

your own sake I advise you, bethink yourself. You will rot in the fortress and you won't be able to do a thing to anybody. Drop it all. You lost your temper, and I lost mine. (*Taps him on the shoulder.*) Come, come, take the oath, and drop this tomfoolery. (*To the AIDE-DE-CAMP.*) Is the chaplain here? (*To BORIS.*) Well, what about it? (*BORIS remains silent.*) Why don't you answer? I assure you it will be best for you. You can't break a log with a whip. You can keep your ideas to yourself, and you'll soon be through with the service. We will not force you. Well, how about it?

BORIS.

I have nothing else to say, I have said all.

GENERAL.

Here you write that there is such and such a verse in the Gospel. The parsons know about such things. Have a talk with the chaplain and think it over. That would be better. Good-bye, or I hope it will be "till we meet again," when I may congratulate you on your entry in the Tsar's service. Send the chaplain in.

(*Exit, followed by the COLONEL and the AIDE-DE-CAMP.*)

BORIS.

(*To the CLERK and the GUARDS.*) There you see how they talk. They know themselves that they deceive you. Do not give in to them. Drop your rifles. Go away. Let them whip you to death in the disciplinary battalions, it would still be preferable to being the servants of such deceivers.

CLERK.

And how can we be without the military?

BORIS.

That's not for us to argue. We must judge and do what God desires of us. And God desires that...

GUARD.

And what do they mean when they say "Christ-loving soldiers"?

BORIS.

That is not said anywhere. It's an invention of these deceivers.

GUARD.

How do you make that out? Don't the bishops know?

(Enter GENDARMERIE OFFICER and CLERK.)

GENDARMERIE OFFICER.

(To the CLERK.) Is Prince Tcheremshanov, the recruit, to be found here?

CLERK.

Yes, sir. Here he is.

GENDARMERIE OFFICER.

Please come here. Are you Prince Boris Semenovitch Tcheremshanov, who refused to take the oath?

BORIS.

I am he.

GENDARMERIE OFFICER.

(Sits down, points to a seat opposite.) Please, sit down.

BORIS.

I think that our conversation will be utterly futile.

GENDARMERIE OFFICER.

I think otherwise. Not as far as you are concerned, at least. Don't you see, I was informed that you had declined to take the oath and to enter the military service, and that there was a ground for suspicion that you belonged to the revolutionary party. And this is what I was instructed to look into. If this is so, we shall be forced to exempt you from the military service and either confine you in a fortress or banish you in accordance with the measure of your participation in revolutionary activities. Otherwise we must leave you to the military authorities. Don't you see, I have expressed myself very frankly and I hope that you will treat me with the same confidence.

BORIS.

I cannot have any confidence in you, in the first place because you wear this uniform; in the second place, your very office is such that I not only do not respect it but feel the utmost repugnance against it. But I do not refuse to answer your questions. What is it you want to know?

GENDARMERIE OFFICER.

In the first place, what is your name, rank and religion?

BORIS.

All these things you know and I shall not answer these questions. Only one, however, which is very important to me: I am not a member of the so-called Orthodox Church.

GENDARMERIE OFFICER.

What is your religion then?

BORIS.

I do not specify it at all.

GENDARMERIE OFFICER.

But nevertheless....

BORIS.

Well, then, I am a Christian, following the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount.

GENDARMERIE OFFICER.

Write. (*The CLERK writes.*) (*To BORIS.*) But still you acknowledge yourself as belonging to some country, to some station in life?

BORIS.

No, I acknowledge myself a human being, a servant of God.

GENDARMERIE OFFICER.

And why do you not acknowledge yourself a member of the Russian Empire?

BORIS.

Because I do not acknowledge any states.

GENDARMERIE OFFICER.

What do you mean when you say you do not acknowledge them? Do you desire their destruction?

BORIS.

Without doubt. I desire and I work towards that end.

GENDARMERIE OFFICER.

(To the CLERK.) Put that down. (To BORIS.) And by what methods do you work towards that end?

BORIS.

By exposing frauds and falsehoods, by spreading the truth. At the moment you entered I was pleading with these soldiers not to believe in the fraud into which they had been misled.

GENDARMERIE OFFICER.

But in addition to these methods of exposure and persuasion do you acknowledge any others?

BORIS.

No. Not only do I not acknowledge them, but I regard every act of violence as the greatest sin. And not only violence, but deception and cunning...

GENDARMERIE OFFICER.

Put that down. Very well. And now let me inquire

about your acquaintances. Are you acquainted with Iva-shenkov?

BORIS.

No.

GENDARMERIE OFFICER.

With Klein?

BORIS.

I have heard of him, but have never seen him.

(Enter an elderly CHAPLAIN with a cross on his breast and a New Testament in his hand. The CLERK comes forward for his blessing.)

GENDARMERIE OFFICER.

Well, I think I may finish here. I do not regard you dangerous nor subject to the military authorities. I hope for your speedy release. Yours truly. *(Shakes his hand.)*

BORIS.

I should very much like to say something to you. Pardon me, but I cannot help saying it: Why have you selected such an evil, wicked calling? I should advise you to leave it.

GENDARMERIE OFFICER.

(Smiling.) I thank you for the advice. But there are good reasons for it. My best regards to you. Father, I yield to you.

(Exit with the CLERK.)

CHAPLAIN.

How can you grieve the authorities by refusing to do the duty of a Christian in serving your Tsar and your country?

BORIS.

(*Smiling.*) It's just the thing that I want to do—my duty as a Christian, and that is why I refuse to be a soldier.

CHAPLAIN.

Why do you? It is written: "He who lays down his life for his friends"—such a man is a true Christian.

BORIS.

Yes, to lay down your life, but not to take the life of another.

CHAPLAIN.

Young man, you judge wrongly. Did not John the Baptist say to the soldiers....

BORIS.

(*Smiling.*) It only proves that the soldiers used to rob even in those days and that he stopped them.

CHAPLAIN.

Well, and why won't you take the oath?

BORIS.

You know it is prohibited in the Gospel.

CHAPLAIN.

Not at all. How about Pilate asking Him: "I adjure thee in the name of the living God, art thou the Christ?" And He said: "I am He." Therefore an oath is not forbidden.

BORIS.

Are you not ashamed of yourself? An old man like you?

CHAPLAIN.

Do not be stubborn, let me advise you. We cannot change the world. Take the oath and you will be at peace. And what is sin or is not sin, leave it to the Church to determine.

BORIS.

To you? And are you not terrified to take so much sin upon yourself?

CHAPLAIN.

What sin? I was brought up in the firm faith and I have been a priest for thirty years, there can be no sin upon my shoulders.

BORIS.

But whose is the sin if you deceive so many people? With all the stuff in their heads? (*Pointing to the guards.*)

CHAPLAIN.

This is not for you and me to judge, young man. It befits us to obey our superiors.

BORIS.

Leave me. I feel sorry for you and I regret to say it is repulsive to me to listen to you. If you were only like that general, but you are here with a cross, with the Gospel in your hands, you come to me in the name of Christ, trying to persuade me to renounce Christ. Go away. (*In agitation.*) Go away, leave me. Go away. Take me away so that I need not see anybody. I am tired, I am terribly tired,

CHAPLAIN.

If this is the way you feel, good-bye then.

(Enter AIDE-DE-CAMP. BORIS is sitting in the rear of the room.)

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

Well, and what now?

CHAPLAIN.

Great stubbornness, insubordination.

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

Then he has refused to take the oath and to serve?

CHAPLAIN.

Absolutely.

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

Then he must be taken to the hospital.

CHAPLAIN.

Pass him off as sick? Well, perhaps that would be more convenient, otherwise it would be a very bad example.

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

For observation in the ward for mental ailments. Such are the orders.

CHAPLAIN.

Certainly. My best regards. (*Exit.*)

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

(Approaching BORIS.) Please, I am told to take you away.

BORIS.

Where?

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

Temporarily to a hospital where you will find things more quiet and may have time to think it over.

BORIS.

I have already thought them over. However, let's go.

(*Exeunt.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE III.

Reception room in the hospital. SENIOR and JUNIOR PHYSICIANS, and an INVALID OFFICER in a hospital robe. GUARDS in blouses.

INVALID OFFICER.

I tell you that you are killing me. I feel perfectly recovered.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

Do not excite yourself. I should be glad to discharge you. But you know yourself that it is risky for your own self to set you at liberty. If I knew that you would be attended by someone.

INVALID OFFICER.

You think that I will start to drink again? No, I am cured. But every additional day here is killing me. You do just the contrary to what you should. (*Greatly agitated.*) You're downright cruel. You're all right yourself....

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

Calm yourself. (*Signals to the guards. They approach the invalid from behind.*)

INVALID OFFICER.

It's all right for you to argue since you are free. But we here, locked up among the insane. (*To the guards.*) Don't come near me. Go away.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

I beg you to calm yourself.

INVALID OFFICER.

And I beg you, I demand of you—release me. (*Screams, and struggles, but the guards seize him. He is led away after a scuffle.*)

JUNIOR PHYSICIAN.

Back to his old tricks. He almost hurt you.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

An alcoholic case and we can't do a thing with him. Still he shows some improvement.

(Enter AIDE-DE-CAMP.)

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

Good morning, gentlemen.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

Good morning.

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

I have brought you an interesting case. A certain Prince Tcheremshanov who was to enter the military service, but refused on the pretext of the Gospel. We sent him to the gendarmerie office, but they found nothing politically objectionable in him, and therefore consider him out of their jurisdiction. The chaplain reasoned with him, but without success.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

(*Laughing.*) And as usual you come to us as the last resort. Well, let's have him.

(*Exit JUNIOR PHYSICIAN.*)

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

They say he is a very well educated young man. And engaged to a rich girl. It's remarkable. I fully believe that this is the right place for him.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

Yes, doubtless a mania of some kind.

(*BORIS is led in.*)

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

Come in, sir. Sit down, please. Let's have a talk. And you may leave us, please. (*Exit AIDE-DE-CAMP.*)

BORIS.

If you have to lock me up somewhere, I should ask you, if possible, kindly to lock me up as soon as you can and to give me some rest.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

Pardon me, but it is necessary to observe certain rules. Just a few questions. How do you feel? Do you suffer any pains?

BORIS.

None whatsoever. I am perfectly well.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

But you do not act like the rest of the people.

BORIS.

I act as my conscience directs me.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

You have declined to fulfil your military duty. What is your motive in doing so?

BORIS.

I am a Christian and I cannot kill.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

But the country must be defended against enemies, it must be preserved against the wickedness of those who would violate order.

BORIS.

No one is attacking the country; and violators of public order are more frequently found among those who govern than among those who are the victims of the government's violence.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

Just what do you mean?

BORIS.

Well, for instance, one of the principal sources of evil is liquor which is sold by the government, a false and

fraudulent faith is spread by the government, and then this soldiering in which I am required to participate and which is an important source of corruption—it's insisted on by the government.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

Then in your opinion there is no need of government and states?

BORIS.

This I don't know, but I positively know that I must not participate in evil.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

And what will happen to the world? Our reason is given us to provide for such things.

BORIS.

We are also given reason to see that public welfare is maintained not by violence but by goodness, and that the refusal of one man to participate in evil does not constitute any peril.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

And now let me examine you a little. Please be kind enough to lie down. (*Feels his pulse.*) Don't you feel any pain here?

BORIS.

No.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

And here?

BORIS.

No.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

Take a deep breath. Don't breathe now. Thank you. And now, please. (*Fetches a measuring instrument, measures his forehead and his nose.*) Now be kind enough to shut your eyes and walk a few steps.

BORIS.

And aren't you ashamed of yourself to engage in this rigmarole?

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

What do you mean?

BORIS.

All this tomfoolery. You know that I am perfectly well, that I have been sent here because I declined to participate in their wickedness, that they have nothing to oppose truth with, and that for this reason they pretend that they consider me abnormal, and you co-operate with them. Why, this is vile and disgraceful. Leave it alone.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

Then you refuse to do as I say?

BORIS.

No, I don't care to. You can torture me as you please, but you'll have to do it yourself, I shan't help you. (*Angrily.*) Leave me alone.

(*The SENIOR PHYSICIAN presses a button. Enter two guards.*)

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

Calm yourself. I understand that your nerves are worked up. Would you like to walk over to your ward?

(*Enter JUNIOR PHYSICIAN.*)

JUNIOR PHYSICIAN.

Some visitors have come to see Tcheremshanov.

BORIS.

Who are they?

JUNIOR PHYSICIAN.

Mr. Saryntzov and daughter.

BORIS.

I should like to see them.

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

All right, ask them in. You can receive them here.

(*Exit, followed by the JUNIOR PHYSICIAN.*)

SICIAN and guards. Enter NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH, LYUBA. *The PRINCESS peeps through the door saying: "Go in, I'll be there later."*)

LYUBA..

(*Walks straight to BORIS, clasps his head and kisses him.*)
Poor Boris!

BORIS.

No, don't feel sorry for me, I feel so well, so happy, so joyful. How are you? (*Embraces NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.*)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I have come to say to you one thing above all: in such matters it is worse to overdo than to leave undone. Then again in such matters we must act as the Gospel says: not taking thought in advance as to what we should do or say, "but if they bring you before the magistrates take no heed of what you should say, the spirit of God will speak in you." That means, not to act after figuring out what you should do, but when you feel in your whole being that you cannot act otherwise.

BORIS.

This is just what I did. I did not think that I would refuse. But when I saw all this falsehood, all these symbolic mirrors, documents, police officials, cigarette smoking draft board members, I could not help saying the things I did. I was overawed until I commenced, but after that it was so simple and joyful.

(LYUBA sits down, weeping.)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Above all do nothing for the sake of human glory, to gain approval of those whose opinions you value. As far as I am concerned I can boldly say to you that if this minute you take the oath and enter the service I shall love and respect you no more and no less than before, because not that counts with me which occurs in the world, but that which has taken place in your soul.

BORIS.

Certainly, for if there is a change in the soul, there must come about a change in the world.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

And now I've told you. Your mother is here. She is simply crushed. If you can do what she asks of you, do it, that is what I wanted to tell you.

(*Frenzied screams are heard in the corridor. The INVALID OFFICER rushes into the room, followed by guards who force him back.*)

LYUBA.

This is terrible, and you must stay here?

BORIS.

This does not terrify me. Nothing terrifies me. I am so happy. The only thing that frightens me is your attitude to this. And you must help me. I know you will help me.

LYUBA.

Can I feel pleased over it?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Not be pleased, that is impossible. I am not pleased, for instance, I suffer for him, and oh how gladly would I take his place, but while I suffer, I know that it is for the best.

LYUBA.

Good. But when will they release him?

BORIS.

No one knows. And I give no thought to the future. The present is so good. And you can make it still better.

(Enter the PRINCESS.)

PRINCESS.

No, I can wait no longer. (To NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.) Have you talked him into it? Is he agreed? Borya, darling. Realize what I am suffering. I have spent thirty years of my life for you. I have brought you up, have rejoiced in you. And when all is ready, all has been accomplished, suddenly I must give it all up. Prison, disgrace. No, no, Borya.

BORIS.

Mama, listen.

PRINCESS.

Why don't you say something? You have ruined him

and you must talk him out of it now. It's well enough for you. Lyuba, speak to him.

LYUBA.

What can I say?

BORIS.

Mama, understand there are some things which a man cannot do any more than he can fly. And so I cannot serve.

PRINCESS.

It's your imagination that you cannot. Nonsense. Everybody has served and serves now. You and Nikolay Ivanovitch have invented some sort of Christianity. It is not Christianity at all, it's the devil's teaching which causes everybody to suffer.

BORIS.

This is just what the Gospel says.

PRINCESS.

It says nothing of the kind, and if it does, then it's nonsense. Darling, Borya, take pity on me. (*Throws her arms about his neck and weeps.*) All my life has been one continuous trouble. The only gleam of joy—and this you turn into torture. Borya, take pity on me.

BORIS.

Mama, this is dreadfully painful to me. But I cannot explain it to you.

PRINCESS.

Then don't refuse, say that you will serve.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Tell them that you will think it over, and think it over.

BORIS.

All right, and you mama, have a little mercy on me. It is so hard for me. (*Renewed screams in the corridor.*) For I am in an insane asylum and I might lose my reason in reality.

(Enter SENIOR PHYSICIAN.)

SENIOR PHYSICIAN.

Madam, this may have serious consequences. Your son is in a state of excitement. I think the meeting must be cut short. You may come again on regular visitors' days, Thursdays and Sundays, but please come before noon.

PRINCESS.

Very well, I'll go. Borya, good-bye. Think it over, take pity on me, and meet me joyfully on Thursday.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(*Offers his hand.*) Think with God as though you were sure that you were to face death on the morrow. Only then will you make a right decision. Good-bye.

BORIS.

(To LYUBA.) And what will you say to me?

LYUBA.

I cannot lie. I don't understand why you torture yourself and others. I cannot understand it and I cannot say a word. (*Exit, weeping, followed by all others excepting BORIS.*)

BORIS.

(*Alone.*) Oh, how hard it is! Oh, how hard it is! Lord help me. (*Prays.*)

(*Enter GUARD with a hospital robe.*)

GUARD.

Please change your clothes. (*BORIS changes.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A year has passed since Act III. Salon in the Saryntzov residence, decorated for a dance with piano music. Enter MARIA IVANOVNA in a stylish silk gown, accompanied by ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA. Male servants are arranging flowers before the piano.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

No ball at all. No ball, but a little dance, a *sauterie*, as we used to say in olden days, for the young folks. I cannot send my own children to dance outside. And Makovs had a theatrical, and everybody has had a dance.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

I fear that Nikolay might not like it at all.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

What can I do? (*To a footman.*) Put it down here. God knows I did not want to displease him in any way. But I think he is not as insistent as he used to be.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

He merely does not show it. He returned to his room after dinner and seemed much upset.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

But what can I do? What can I do? Everybody must live. There are seven of them. And if they are not to be entertained at home, God only knows what they will do. I, at least, am so happy about Lyuba.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Has he proposed?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

He has as good as proposed. He had a talk with her, and she said yes.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

This will be a terrible blow to him.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

He knows. He must know.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

He does not like him.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

(*To servants.*) Put the fruit on the buffet. Whom? Alexandre Mikhaïlovitch? Or course, he does not like him, because he is the antithesis of all his theories: he is a man of the world, charming, agreeable and kind. Ah, but that terrible nightmare of Boris Tcheremshanov. How is he?

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Lisanka went to see him. He is still there. They say he has lost a great deal of weight, and the doctors fear for his life or his reason.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Yes, here is a terrible victim of his ideas. Why did he perish? I never desired that.

(Enter PIANIST.)

MARIA IVANOVNA.

(To PIANIST.) You are to play for the dance?

PIANIST.

Yes, I am the pianist.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Will you please sit down and wait. Or would you like some tea?

PIANIST.

No, thank you. (Walks to the piano.)

MARIA IVANOVNA.

No, I never wished for that. I liked Borya, but still he was not the right match for Lyuba. Particularly after he was carried away by Nikolay's ideas.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

Still, what a remarkable power of convictions. See

how he suffers. He is told that if he does not give in he will be either left where he is or put into a fortress. And still he gives them the same answer. And Lisanka says that he appears joyful and even happy.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Fanatics all. Ah, and here is Alexandre Mikhaïlovitch.

(Enter ALEXANDRE MIKHAÏLOVITCH
STARKOVSKY, resplendent in evening dress.)

STARKOVSKY.

I have come early. (Kisses the ladies' hands.)

MARIA IVANOVNA.

So much the better.

STARKOVSKY.

And Lyubov Nikolayevna^{*)}) She meant to dance so many dances to-night to make up for the lost time.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

She is arranging the cotillion favors.

STARKOVSKY.

I'll go and help her, may I?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

That would be fine.

^{*)} Lyuba's formal name.

(*STARKOVSKY starts for the door. Enter LYUBA carrying a cushion with stars and ribbons.*)

LYUBA.

(*In evening gown, but not decolletée.*) Ah, here you are. That's nice. Ther are two more cushions in the drawing room, bring them all here. How do you do, how do you do?

STARKOVSKY.

I'm off like the whirlwind. (*Exit.*)

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Listen, Lyuba, there will be guests here to-night, there will be hints and questions. May I make the announcement?

LYUBA.

No, mama, don't. What for? Let them ask. It might displease papa.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

But he knows or guesses, and sooner or later he will have to be told. I think it is better to announce it to-day. For *c'est le secret de la comédie.**)

LYUBA.

No, mama, don't, please don't. This will mean spoiling the whole evening. No, don't.

*) It is an open secret.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Just as you say.

LYUBA.

I tell you what—do it towards the end of the evening, just before supper.

(Enter STARKOVSKY.)

LYUBA.

Are you bringing it all?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Well, I'll go and hunt up Natasha. (Exit with ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.)

STARKOVSKY.

(Carrying three cushions which he holds down with his chin, losing some favors on the way.) Luybov Nikolayevna, don't touch them, I'll pick them up. My, but you've made enough favors. The main thing is now to arrange it all properly. Vanya, come.

(Enter VANYA, carrying more favors.)

VANYA.

It's all now. Lyuba, Alexandre Mikhailovitch and I have made a bet to see who will earn most favors.

STARKOVSKY.

It will be easy for you, you know everybody and you've

earned some in advance, but I must first captivate the maidens and then earn my rewards. That means you have a forty points start on me.

VANYA.

But then you are a fiancé and I'm only a boy.

STARKOVSKY.

Well, I'm not yet a fiancé and I'm worse off than a boy.

LYUBA.

Vanya, please go to my room and bring me a jar of paste from the closet and my needle cushion. (VANYA *hurries off.*) Only for heaven's sake don't break anything there.

VANYA.

(*On the run.*) I'll break up everything in the place.

STARKOVSKY.

(*Taking LYUBA's hand.*) Lyuba, may I? I am so happy. (*Kisses her hand.*) The Mazurka is mine, but I am not content. Not much chance to say it all during a Mazurka. And I must say it. May I telegraph to my folks that you have accepted and that I am happy?

LYUBA.

Yes, to-night.

STARKOVSKY.

One more thing. How will Nikolay Ivanovitch take it? Have you spoken to him? Have you?

LYUBA.

Not yet, but I will. He will take it as he takes now everything that concerns the family. He will say: Do as you know best. But he will be pained inwardly.

STARKOVSKY.

Just because I am not Tcheremshanov? Because I am gentleman-in-waiting at the court and marshal of the nobility?

LYUBA.

Yes. But I have struggled with myself, I have deluded myself for his sake. And if I do not do as he wishes, it does not mean that I love him less than I used to, but simply that I cannot lie. I have too great a longing to live.

STARKOVSKY.

And life is the only truth. Well, and how about Tcheremshanov?

LYUBA.

(*In agitation.*) Do not talk to me of him. I have a good mind to reproach him, and to reproach him even though he is suffering. And the reason is that I feel so guilty before him. But I know one thing only that there is love, and I think genuine love, and I never loved him like that.

STARKOVSKY.

Lyuba, is this true?

LYUBA.

You want me to say to you that I love you with that genuine love? But I will not say so. Yes, I love you with a different love from the one I had felt for him, but even this is not it. Neither the one nor the other is just it. A mixture of the two might be.

STARKOVSKY.

No, but I am content with mine. (*Kisses her hand.*)
Lyuba!

LYUBA.

(*Holding him off.*) No, let's better arrange these favors. And the guests are beginning to arrive.

(*Enter the PRINCESS with TONYA and a younger daughter.*)

LYUBA.

Mama will be out presently.

PRINCESS.

Are we the first to arrive?

STARKOVSKY.

Someone must be first. I suggested letting a rubber doll play the part of the first arrival.

(Enter STEPA and VANYA with paste and pins.)

STEPA.

I had hoped to see you last night at the Italian opera.

TONYA.

I was last night at my aunt's, sewing for the poor.

(Enter students, MARIA IVANOVNA, and COUNTESS.)

COUNTESS.

Shall we not see Nikolay Ivanovitch?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

No, he never comes out.

STARKOVSKY.

Quadrille, please. (Claps his hands. The dancers take up their positions, the dance commences.)

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

(Crosses over to MARIA IVANOVNA.) He is terribly excited. He had been to see Boris Semenovitch, and returning found a dance going on and is getting ready to leave. I went up to the door and heard him speak with Alexandre Petrovitch.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Well and what?

(*Voice from the floor: "Ronde des dames! Les cavaliers en avant!"*)

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.

He has decided that he could not live here any more and is preparing to go.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

What a torture this man is. (*Exit.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE II.

Private room of NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH. Sounds of music from the distance. He is clad in an overcoat and is in the act of placing a sealed letter upon the table. With him is a shabby-genteel, ALEXANDER PETROVITCH, in tattered clothing.

ALEXANDRE PETROVICH.

Don't be afraid. We can get to Caucasus without a copper. And once there you can arrange matters.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

We'll go by train as far as Tula, and then we'll walk. Well, everything is ready. (*Places the letter on the table, in the very center, and turns to go, but meets MARIA IVANOVNA.*)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Why have you come?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Why? To prevent you from doing a very cruel deed.
What is this for? On account of what?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Why? Because I cannot keep on living like this. I
cannot bear this terrible depraved life any longer.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

But this is terrible. My life, which I have fully sur-
rendered to you and to the children, depraved! (*Notices*
ALEXANDRE PETROVICH.) *Renvoyez au moins cet homme.*
*Je ne veux pas qu'il soit témoin de cette conversation.**)

ALEXANDRE PETROVICH.

(*In farcial French.*) *Comprenez toujours moi parté.*

(*Exit.*)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Wait for me outside, Alexandre Petrovitch, I shall come
out presently.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

What can you have in common with such a person?

*) Send this man away at least. I don't want him to be a
witness to this conversation.

And why he should be closer to you than your wife is beyond me to comprehend. Where are you going?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I left you a letter. I did not want to have words with you. I feel too pained. But if you wish I will try to tell you calmly.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

No, I can't understand. Why do you hate and torture a wife who has given up everything for you? Tell me: have I gallivanted about balls, have I overdressed myself, flirted? My whole life has been given up to my family. I have nursed every child, have educated them all, and this last year the entire burden of their education, of the management has been on my shoulders.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

But this burden is on your shoulders because you did not want to live as I proposed.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

That would have been impossible. Ask the whole world. It is impossible to leave the children illiterate as you wanted them to be, and to do my own washing and cooking.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I never insisted on that.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

It does not matter, it would have been something of

that sort. But you, a Christian, you say that you would do good, you say that you love other people. Why do you torment the woman who has given up her life for you?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

How do I torment you? I love you, but...

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Of course you torment me by abandoning me, by going away. What will the people say? Either that I am a wicked woman or that you are crazy.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Let me be crazy, only I can't live like this.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

What is there that is terrible about it? That during the whole winter—for the very reason that I feared it might displease you—I have arranged one solitary evening entertainment? And such a modest one—ask Manya, ask Varvara Vasilyevna; I was told that it had to be done, that it was a necessity. And this is the crime for which I must bear disgrace. And not only disgrace. The main thing is that you love me no more: you love the whole world, including that drunkard Alexandre Petrovitch—and still I love you and cannot live without you. Why have you done this? Why?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

You do not want to understand my life, my spiritual life.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

I want to, but I cannot. I see that your Christianity has led you to hate your own family, to hate me. And why? That I don't understand.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

But others do.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Who? Alexandre Petrovitch who wheedles money out of you?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

He and others, and Tonya, and Vassily Nikanorovitch. But that makes no difference. If no one understood me it would not alter matters.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Vassily Nikanorovitch*) has recanted and has accepted a parish again. And Tonya this minute is dancing and flirting with Stepa.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

That is too bad, but it cannot make white black, nor can it alter my life. Masha, you don't need me. Let me go. I tried to take part in your life, to inject into it that which for me constitutes my whole life, but it is impossible. The only result is that I torment you and torment myself. And I not only torment myself but I ruin my own work. Anybody, take this same Alexandre Petrovitch, can tell me that I am a fraud, that I speak but do not act, that I preach evangelical poverty but live in luxury under the pretext that I have given everything to my wife.

*) Father Vassily

MARIA IVANOVNA.

And you are ashamed before people? Can't you really rise above that?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

It is not that I am ashamed—though I am ashamed, but I ruin the work of God.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

You told me yourself that it is being accomplished in spite of our working against it. But that is not the point. Tell me what do you want of me?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I did tell you.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

But, Nikolay, you know that it is impossible. Think of it only, Lyuba is about to marry. Vanya has entered college. Misha, Katya are going to school. How can I break it all up?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

And how am I to be?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Do what you preach—bear, love. Where is your difficulty? Only to bear with us, not to deprive us of yourself. What is it that is troubling you? (*Enter VANYA running.*)

VANYA.

Mama they are calling you.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Tell them that I can't come. Go, go.

VANYA.

Don't be long then. (*Exit.*)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

You do not want to see my point, to understand me.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

It is not that I don't want to, I simply can't.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

No, you don't want to, and we are drifting further and further apart. Enter into me, put yourself into my place for a moment, and you will understand. In the first place your whole life here is depraved. You are angry because I use this word, but how else can I call a life that is built entirely on robbery, because the money on which you live is payment for the land which you have stolen from the people. Moreover, I see that this life corrupts the children. "Woe unto him that shall offend one of these little ones." And I see that they are being depraved and are perishing before my very eyes. I cannot see grown up people, dressed in swallow-tail coats, serving us like slaves. Every dinner is a torture for me.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

But it has always been that way. This is done by everybody, everywhere, abroad even.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

I cannot bear it since I have learned that we are all brothers, and I cannot see it all without suffering.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Why? It's all imagination.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(*Hotly.*) This lack of understanding is dreadful. Take this very day. I spent the morning in the Rshanov house, among the submerged, and I saw a baby that had literally starved to death; a boy who had acquired the liquor habit; a consumptive woman on her way to do laundry work; and then I come home, and a flunkey in a white necktie opens the door for me, I see my son, a stripling lad, order this flunkey to bring him water, I see this horde of servants that is working for us. Then I go to see Boris, a man who is defending truth with his very existence, and find this man, pure, strong and resolute, being purposely goaded into insanity and destruction in order to get rid of him. They know that he has a defect of the heart and they tease him and drag him in among raving maniacs. No, it's terrible. And then I come home and learn that the one daughter of this family who understood—I will not say understood me, but understood the truth, had in one breath renounced the man to whom she was betrothed and to whom she had promised her love, and recanted the truth and is about to marry a flunkey and a liar.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

How Christian this all is!

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Yes this was mean, I am at fault, but I only want you to put yourself in my position. I only want to show that she had recanted the truth.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

You say the truth, but others—the majority—say it was all error. Take this Vassily Nikanorovitch, he came to the conclusion that he was in error, and now he is back in the church.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

It cannot be..

MARIA IVANOVNA.

He has written Lisanka, she'll show you the letter. All this is so unsubstantial. Take Tonya too. I will not say a word about Alexandre Petrovitch, who is gaining by it materially.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(*Angrily.*) All right then. But I beg you to understand me. I still think that truth is truth. And so these things pain me. And here I come home and find a Christmas tree, a ball, a waste of hundreds of roubles, while people are starving to death. I cannot live like this. Have pity on me, I'm all worn out, let me go. Good-bye.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

If you go, I'll go with you. And if I can't, I'll throw myself under the wheels of the train which will take you away. And let them all be lost, Katya and Misha and all. My God, my God, what torments! Why? Why? (*Weeping.*)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(*Through the door.*) Alexandre Petrovitch, go to your own place, I'm not going. I'll stay, very well. (*Takes off his overcoat.*)

MARIA IVANOVNA.

(*Embraces him.*) We have not much life left to live. Do not let us spoil it after twenty eight years of married life. I shall have no more parties. But do not punish me like this. (*Enter VANYA and KATYA, running.*) Mama, come quick.

MARIA IVANOVNA.

I'm coming, I'm coming,—so let us forgive one another.

(*Exit with VANYA and KATYA.*)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(*Alone.*) She's a child, altogether a child, or is she a cunning woman? Yes, that's it, a cunning child. Yes, yes. It is plain to be seen, Thou dost not want me to be Thy laborer in this Thy business; Thou wantest me to be humbled, to have them all point a finger of scorn at me—"he preaches, but does not practice". Very well then. Thou

knowest better what Thou hast need of: humility, being accounted a fool.. If I only could rise up to that even..
(Enter LISANKA.)

LISANKA.

Pardon me. I had a letter from Vassily Nikanorovitch that I wanted to show you. He addressed it to me, but asked me to show it to you.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Is it really true?

LISANKA.

Yes, shall I read it?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Please, do.

LISANKA.

(Reading.) "I am writing this to you, but beg you to communicate it to Nikolay Ivanovitch. I greatly deplore the delusion due to which I openly seceded from the Holy Orthodox Church and I rejoice that I have returned to it. I wish the same for you and for Nikolay Ivanovitch. Please forgive me."

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Poor fellow, they have hounded him into it. But still this is dreadful.

LISANKA.

And I also came to tell you that the Princess is here and that she came up to my room in a state of terrible excitement and insists on seeing you immediately, without fail. She had just been to see her son. I think it would be best to put her off. What good could come of this interview?

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

No, call her. This is surely a day of great trials.

LISANKA.

I'll call her then. (*Exit.*)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(*Alone.*) Yes, yes, only to be mindful that life is to serve Thee. To be mindful that Thou sendest me trials only because Thou regardest me capable of bearing them, that they are not above my strength. Otherwise they would not be trials... Father, help me to do Thy will, not mine...

(*Enter PRINCESS.*)

PRINCESS.

So you've deigned to receive me. My compliments to you. I do not offer my hand to you because I hate you, I despise you.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

What has happened?

PRINCESS.

He is being transferred to the Disciplinary Battalion.
And you're responsible for it all.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Princess, if you need anything, say it, but if you have come merely to abuse me, you will only harm yourself by it. You cannot insult me for I sympathize with you and pity you with my whole soul.

PRINCESS.

What compassion, what lofty Christianity! No, Mr. Saryntzov, you cannot fool me. I know you now. You have ruined my son, you don't care a rap, you're giving parties, and the girl who was betrothed to my son, your daughter, is marrying another man, is making a match such as pleases you. And you pretend here that you have taken up the simple life, fooling with cabinet-making. Oh, how disgusting you are with your up-to-date Pharisaism.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Princess, calm yourself. Tell me what you need. You surely have not come to abuse me.

PRINCESS.

Yes, that too. I must pour out that which has accumulated in my heart. And what I need is this. He is being transferred to the Disciplinary Battalion. I am not able to bear it. It is all your doing. Yours, yours, yours!

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Not mine, but God's. God did it. And God sees how sorry I am for you. Do not resist the will of God. Bear it obediently.

PRINCESS.

I cannot bear it obediently. This my only son had meant life to me, and you took him away from me and ruined him. I cannot be calm. I came to you as the last attempt to tell you that you having ruined him must save him. Go, do your utmost to have him released. Go to the highest authorities, to the Tsar, to whomever you please. Only you must do it. If you don't do it, I know what I shall do. You will answer to me for it.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Instruct me what to do. I am willing to do anything.

PRINCESS.

I repeat again. You must save him. If you don't save him, beware. Good-bye. (*Exit.*)

(NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH alone. *Lies down on the sofa. Silence. The door is opened. Sounds of music. Enter STEPA.*)

STEPA.

Papa is not here, come in.

(Enter several couples, young and grown up.)

LYUBA.

(Noticing her father.) Papa, you are here? Excuse us.

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

(Rising.) it does not matter.

(*Exeunt couples.*)

NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH.

Vassily Nikanorovitch has recanted. I have ruined Boris, Lyuba is getting married. Am I really deluded? Am I deluded in believing in Thee? No. Father, help me.

CURTAIN.

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ACT V.

(Synopsis of the unfinished ACT V, from author's manuscript.)

SCENE I.

The Disciplinary Battalion. A ward. Prisoners sitting and lounging about. BORIS reading the New Testament. He is expounding it.

A man who has just suffered corporal punishment is brought in. "Oh, for a new Pugatchev) upon you!"*

The PRINCESS rushes in, but is driven out. Encounter with an officer. To prayers. BORIS is ordered to the dungeon. "We'll flog him."

SCENE II.

The Emperor's Cabinet.

Cigarettes. Jokes. Caresses. The PRINCESS is announced. "Let her wait." Petitioners are admitted, adulation. Enter the PRINCESS. Rebuffed. Exeunt.

*) Famous rebel who had led a rising against the crown.

SCENE III.

MARIA IVANOVNA and a DOCTOR discuss the illness of NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH. He has greatly changed and is meek, but very downhearted.

Enter NIKOLAY IVANOVITCH. Speaks with the DOCTOR. Medical ministrations futile. The soul is more important. But for the sake of his wife he consents to go under the DOCTOR'S care.

Enter TONYA with STEPA; LYUBA with STARKOVSKY. He talks to them about the land, trying not to hurt their feelings. Exeunt all. He is left alone with LISANKA. "I am forever vacillating. Have I done right? I have ruined Boris. Vassily Nikanorovitch has recanted. I am an example of weakness. I see that God does not want me to be His servant. He has many other servants. He will accomplish His purposes without me. And when I understand this clearly I am at peace." Exit LISANKA. He prays. The PRINCESS rushes in, kills him. All run into the room. He claims that he had fired the shot himself, accidentally. He is writing a petition to the Tsar. Enter VASSILY NIKANOROVITCH with a company of Dukhobors. He dies rejoicing in seeing the delusion of the Church dispelled and the meaning of life made clear.

THE LIVING CORPSE.



ACT I.

SCENE I.

Protasov's residence.

CHARACTERS.

ELISAVETA ANDREYEVNA PROTASOVA ("LISA").

SASHA, her sister.

ANNA PAVLOVNA, their mother, a portly, grey-haired lady.

VICTOR MIKHAILOVITCH KARENIN, gentleman-in-waiting at the Court.

NURSE.

DUNYASHA, the maid.

GLOSSARY OF NAMES*).

Elisaveta Andreyevna Protasova, Elisabeth daughter of Andrew, wife of Protasov. Diminutive Lisa and Lisanka.

Sasha—diminutive of Alexandra.

Dunyasha, a plebeian name, diminutive of Avdotia.

Anna Pavlovna—Anna, daughter of Paul.

*) For the convenience of the reader the list of characters appearing in each scene is given immediately before each scene, with an indication of the correct pronunciation and with explanatory notes by the Translator.

The use of Christian name and patronymic renders the surname superfluous in polite address.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Dining room of PROTASOV's residence.

ANNA PAVLOVNA, a stout, tight-laced, grey-haired lady, seated at a tea table, alone. NURSE enters with a tea pot.)

NURSE.

May I get a little hot water from you, ma'am?

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Certainly. How is Mishetchka?*)

NURSE.

Why, he's restless. It's the worst thing in the world for a lady to nurse her own child. She may have troubles of her own, and the infant suffers. What kind of milk can you expect, if the mother doesn't sleep nights, crying?

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

She has calmed down now, hasn't she?

*) Diminutive for Mikhail.

NURSE.

Calm down, indeed! It would make you sick to see her. She's been writing something and crying.

(Enter SASHA.)

SASHA.

(To nurse.) Lisa is calling you.

NURSE.

I'm on my way.

(Exit NURSE.)

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Nurse says that she is crying all the time. Why won't she compose herself?

SASHA.

You're really funny, mama. Giving up her husband, the father of the child, and you expect her to be calm!

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Not calm exactly. But what is done with, is done with. If I, as a mother, not only consent, but rejoice in my own daughter casting off her husband, the conclusion is that he deserves it. It's a cause for rejoicing and not for grief to be rid of such a wicked man. He was, indeed, a treasure!

SASHA.

Why do you say such things, mama? You know that

this is not true. He is not a wicked man, but on the contrary a wonderful, a wonderful man, in spite of his weaknesses.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

That's just it, he's a wonderful man the moment he lays his hands on some money, his own or somebody else's.....

SASHA.

Mama, he has never touched anybody else's money.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Well, his wife's then.

SASHA.

But didn't he turn over all he had to his wife?

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

And why not? He knew that he would otherwise squander it.

SASHA.

Whether he'd squander it or not, I don't know, but I do know that it is a sin for a woman to cast off her husband, particularly such a good one as Fedyo.*)

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

According to your ideas the thing to do is to wait

*) Fedyo—diminutive for Feodor.

until he runs through everything and starts bringing his Gipsy mistress into the house.

SASHA.

He has no mistresses.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

That's the whole trouble. He has cast some sort of a spell over you all. Only he can't fool me, no, thank you, I can see through him and he knows it. In Lisa's place I should not have waited until now to cast him off, I should have done it a year ago.

SASHA.

How lightly you speak of it!

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

No, not lightly. As a mother it is no light thing for me to see my daughter divorced. Believe me that this is anything but a light matter. But I thank God that she has made up her mind and that she is through with him.

SASHA.

And perhaps she is not through at that.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

If he only would consent to a divorce.

SASHA.

And, pray, what would be the good of that?

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

She is still young and she can yet be happy.

SASHA.

You say dreadful things, mama, Lisa can never love another.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

And why not? Once she's free, she'll find someone a thousand times superior to Fedya, who would be happy to marry her.

SASHA.

Why, mama, that's wicked. I know you are thinking of Victor Karenin.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Why shouldn't I think of him? He has been in love with her for ten years, and she is fond of him too.

SASHA.

She may be fond of him, but she does not love him like her husband. It's a mere boy and girl friendship.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

I know that kind of friendship. If only no obstacles turn up.

(Enter the MAID.)

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

What do you want?

MAID.

Madam sent the porter with a note to Victor Mikhailovitch,

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Who did?

MAID.

Elisaveta Andreyevna, ma'am.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Well, what of it?

MAID.

Victor Mikhailovitch has sent word that he'd come over at once.

ANNA PAVLOVNA (*amazed.*)

We've just been talking about him. Only I don't know what she wants with him. (*To SASHA.*) Do you?

SASHA.

May be I do, and may be I don't.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Always these secrets.

SASHA.

Lisa will be here presently and she might tell you herself.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

(*Shaking her head, to the MAID.*) The samovar ought to be warmed up. Take it away, Dunyasha.

(*The MAID takes the samovar; exit.*)

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

(*To SASHA who had meanwhile risen to her feet and is about to leave the room.*) It has turned out just as I predicted. She has lost no time in sending for him.

SASHA.

Perhaps she has sent for him with a very different purpose in view.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

For what other reason then?

SASHA.

At the present moment Karenin means very little to her.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

You'll see. I know her. She has called him, because she wants to be consoled.

SASHA.

How little you know her, mama! If you can imagine...

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

You'll see. And I'm very, very glad.

SASHA.

We'll see.

(*Exit, humming.*)

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

(*Alone, shaking her head and muttering to herself.*) Fine and dandy! Fine and dandy! Yes...

(*Enter the MAID.*)

MAID.

Victor Mikhailovitch has arrived, ma'am.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Why, ask him in and tell your mistress.

(*Exit the MAID through a door leading to the inner apartment. Enter KARENIN, bowing to ANNA PAVLOVNA.*)

KARENIN.

Elisaveta Andreyevna sent me a note asking me to come over. But I was about to come over of my own accord, so I was very glad.... Is Elisaveta Andreyevna well?

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

She is quite well, but the baby is a little out of sorts. She will be here directly. (*Sadly.*) This is a very painful occasion. You know all that's happened, don't you?

KARENIN.

Yes, I do. I was here the other day when his letter arrived. But has it all been settled beyond recall?

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Why certainly. It would be dreadful to have to live it all over again.

KARENIN.

This is a case where the proverb applies: Measure the cloth ten times before you cut once. And it's a painful thing to cut into living tissue.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

True enough. But this marriage had an old crease to start with, and the final rent will come easier than you think. He realizes himself that after what has happened he cannot come back.

KARENIN.

But why not?

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Would you have him come back again? In spite of his abominable actions? After his solemn oath never to

act like that again, or if he failed to keep word, to relinquish his rights as a husband and to give her full freedom of action?

KARENIN.

But what freedom of action can a woman have if bound to a man by bonds of matrimony?

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Divorce. He promised a divorce and we shall insist on it.

KARENIN.

Yes, but Elisaveta Andreyevna loved him so much...

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

That may be so, but her love had been put to such a severe strain that there is hardly a trace left of it. Drunken debauches, lies, unfaithfulness.. Can a woman love a husband like that?

KARENIN.

Love can do all things.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

You say—love! But how can anybody love a man like that—a mere rag, utterly undependable? Why, do you know what he has been up to now? (*Hurriedly, with a cautious glance at the door.*) Here they are in a terrible plight financially, everything is mortgaged, no money to pay interest. Finally uncle sends down two thousand roubles to

meet the interest charges. He takes this money and disappears. The wife is left alone with a sick baby on her hands, and one fine day comes a note from him: 'Send me my clothes and things.'

KARENIN.

Here is Victor Mikhailovitch in answer to your summons...

(Enter LISA and SASHA.)

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Yes, I know.

KARENIN.

I was slightly delayed. (*He shakes hands with the sisters.*)

LISA.

Thank you so much. I have a great favor to ask of you. And I have no one to turn to but you.

KARENIN.

Anything in my power...

LISA.

You know all about this, don't you?

KARENIN.

I do.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Then I shall leave you alone. (*To SASHA.*) Let us go and leave them undisturbed.

(*Exit with SASHA.*)

LISA.

He wrote me a letter in which he said: 'All is over between us.' I was so hurt (*restraining her tears*) that... well to cut it short I consented to the rupture.. and I notified him that I had accepted his decision.

KARENIN.

And now you regret it?

LISA.

Yes, I feel that it was mean on my part to do so, that I really could not. Anything better than part with him. To make it short, I want you to give him this letter. Please, Victor, give him this letter and tell him... Bring him back.

KARENIN.

(*Surprised.*) But how?

LISA.

Tell him that I want him to forget everything and to come home. I could have sent him this letter by post. But I know him so well. His first impulse will be good, as usual, but some other influence is bound to intervene, he'll change his mind and will go against his own judgment.

KARENIN.

I'll do what I can.

LISA.

Are you surprised that I should have asked *you* of all people?

KARENIN.

No... Well, to tell the truth, yes, I am surprised.

LISA.

But you are not angry with me?

KARENIN.

How can I be angry with you?

LISA.

I have asked you because I know that *you love him*.

KARENIN.

Both him and you too. You know it. And I love you both for your own sakes, and not for mine. And I appreciate your trust in me. I shall do all I can.

LISA.

I knew you would. I will tell you all. I went over to Afremov's to-day to find out where he was. And I was told that he had gone to the gipsies.. And that is what scares me. I am afraid of this infatuation. I know that if he is not restrained in time, he may fall under their in-

fluence completely. And therefore he must be restrained. Will you go?

KARENIN.

Of course, instantly.

LISA.

Go and find him and tell him that all is forgotten and I'm waiting for him.

KARENIN.

(*Rising.*) But where shall I look for him?

LISA.

He is at the Gipsies'. I went there myself and got as far as the porch, I had the letter in my hand ready to send in, but changed my mind and decided to ask you. Here is the address. So tell him, please, to come back, tell him that nothing has occurred, that everything is forgotten. Do it out of love for him and friendship for both of us.

KARENIN.

I'll do everything in my power. (*Lingers, bows, exit.*)

LISA.

(*Alone.*) I cannot, I cannot, anything is better than.... No, I cannot.

(*Enter SASHA.*)

SASHA.

Well, did you send him?

(LISA nods affirmatively.)

SASHA.

And was he willing?

LISA.

Of course.

SASHA.

But why did you choose *him* to do it? That is beyond me.

LISA.

Whom else?

SASHA.

Don't you know that he is in love with you?

LISA.

That's a thing of the past. Whom else should I have asked, pray?.... Do you think he will come back?

SASHA.

I feel sure he will because....

(Enter ANNA PAVLOVNA. SASHA checks herself.)

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

And where is Victor Mikhailovitch?

LISA.

Gone.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Gone? Why?

LISA.

He is gone on an errand for me.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

What errand? More secrets?

LISA.

No secrets, I have asked him to deliver a letter into Fedya's own hands.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

What Fedya? Not Feodor Vasilievitch?*)

LISA.

Yes, Fedya.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

But I thought you had severed all connections with him.

*) The formal name of Lisa's husband.

LISA.

I cannot part with him.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

What? Are we to start all over again?

LISA.

I have tried, and I meant it, but I can't do it. I'll do anything you say, except give him up.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Then you mean to take him back?

LISA.

Yes.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

To have this vile creature back in the house?

LISA.

Mama, please, don't talk like that about my husband.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Your former husband.

LISA.

No, he is still my husband.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

A wastrel, a sot, a libertine, and you can't give him up?

LISA.

Why do you torture me? I am suffering agonies, and you insist on torturing me.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Do I torture you? Then I'll go, I cannot bear to remain and witness all this.

(LISA *maintains silence.*)

I see that you want me to go, that I am in your way. I cannot live in this house. I can't make you out. All these new-fangled notions. First you make up your mind to separate, then you send for a man who is deeply in love with you.

LISA.

Nothing of the kind.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Karenin once proposed to you, and you send him to fetch your husband. What was that for? To arouse jealousy?

LISA.

Mama, what dreadful things you are saying! Please leave me in peace.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

That's right, drive your own mother out of the house, but bring back your profligate husband. I won't wait, however, for you to do it. So good-bye, good riddance, you can do as you please.

(*Exit, banging the door.*)

LISA.

(*Sinking in a chair.*) That was the last straw.

SASHA.

Don't worry. Everything will come out all right. And as for mama, we'll quiet her down.

(*Enter ANNA PAVLOVNA crossing the room.*)

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Dunyasha, my bag.

SASHA.

Listen, mama...

(*She follows her out of the room, winking slyly at LISA.*)

ACT I.

SCENE II.

A Gipsy restaurant.

CHARACTERS.

FEODOR VASILYEVITCH PROTASOV (FEDYA).

MASHA, a pretty young Gipsy girl.

AFREMOV, a man about town.

KARENIN.

GIPSY MINSTRELS.

MALE GIPSY.

FEMALE GIPSY.

A MUSICIAN.

AN OFFICER.

Feodor—Theodore.

Fedya—Teddy.

Masha—diminutive of Maria.

Gipsy Chorus—a specifically Russian form of entertainment, reminiscent of negro minstrels. The Gipsy chorus either appears in a restaurant owned by the Gipsies themselves, or by contract in a Russian restaurant. They have developed a minstrelsy of their own, with weird plaintive tunes and songs of sentimental and romantic character. Alongside of the more reputable entertainments of this character, the Gipsies have also provided a thinly cloaked musical setting for the “oldest profession.”—Translator’s note.

ACT I.

SCENE II.

Room in a Gipsy restaurant. The Gipsies sing "Cama-vela." FEDYA, in shirt sleeves, reclining on the sofa, with his face buried in the cushions. AFREMOV, astride on a chair, facing the leader of the band. AN OFFICER at a table with a bottle of champagne and glasses. A MUSICIAN close by, taking down notes of the songs.

AFREMOV.

Fedya, are you asleep?

FEDYA.

(Rising.) Don't talk. Let them sing "*Not the Shades of Night.*"

MALE GIPSY.

No, Feodor Vasilyevitch, it can't be done. It's Masha's turn for a solo.

FEDYA.

All right then. But after that "*Not the Shades of Night.*" (Lies down again.)

OFFICER.

Let her sing "*The Fatal Hour.*" Are you willing?

MALE GIPSY.

Would you like that?

AFREMOV.

All right.

OFFICER.

(To MUSICIAN.) Well, have you got that last song down?

MUSICIAN.

It's impossible. They sing it a different way each time. And thy've got some sort of a different scale. (*He beckons to a female Gipsy who has been watching him.*) How is this? (*He hums a tune.*) Have I got it right this time?

FEMALE GIPSY.

Perfect. Wonderful.

FEDYA.

(*Rising.*) He'll never get it down in notes, and if he does, he'll stick it into an opera and kill it. Well, Masha, fire away. "*The Fatal Hour,*" if it must be. Take your guitar. (*Rises, sits down facing her and rivets his eyes upon her.*)

(MASHA sings.)

FEDYA.

Great! Bully for you, Masha! And now, "*Not the Shades of Night.*"

AFREMOV.

Wait a bit. First comes my funeral song.

OFFICER.

Why a funeral song?

AFREMOV.

Ah, that's because when I come to die.. Do you get my meaning? When I come to die and am laid in my coffin, then the Gipsy minstrels shall come... do you understand me? That's in my will, enjoined on my wife, you know.. And they'll sing "*Weary Miles.*" Then I'll leap from my coffin, do you follow me? (*To the MUSICIAN.*) That's the tune you want to get down on paper. Fire away, now!

(*The GIPSY MINSTRELS sing.*)

AFREMOV.

How was that, eh? And now "*Pals of Mine.*"

(*The GIPSY MINSTRELS sing. AFREMOV dances some steps to the tune of the song. The Gipsies smile, continue to sing and clap their hands. AFREMOV sits down. The song is finished.*)

GIPSY MINSTRELS.

Three cheers for Mikhail Andreyevitch, he's a regular Gipsy.

FEDYA.

And now "*Not the Shades of Night.*"

(*The Gipsies sing.*)

FEDYA.

There's a song for you. There's a song for you. It's amazing... where in the world can you find all the things that this music brings out? How wonderful it is. And why is it the lot of man to reach such a pinnacle of ecstasy, and be unable to hold on?

MUSICIAN.

(*Marking down the tune.*) Yes, it's very original.

FEDYA.

Not original, it's the real thing

AFREMOV.

Well, Gipisies, take a rest. (*Picks up the guitar and sits down by the side of the Gipsy woman.*)

MUSICIAN.

It's very simple in the final analysis, but only the time is difficult.

FEDYA.

(*Makes a gesture of disgust, walks over to Masha and sits down beside her on the sofa.*) Masha, Masha, you are turning me inside out.

MASHA.

How about what I asked you?

FEDYA.

Money? Money? (*He puts his hand in his trousers' pocket.*) There, take it.

(*MASHA laughs, and hides the money in the bosom of her blouse.*)

FEDYA.

(*To the Gipsies.*) You people are a puzzle to me. Take her: she gives me a glimpse of heaven, and in return begs for money to buy cheap perfume. Do you realize what you are doing? Like hell you do.

MASHA.

Why not? Don't I understand that if I love a man I must try hard to sing so as to please him?

FEDYA.

And do you love me?

MASHA.

Cant' you see that I do?

FEDYA.

Wonderful! (*Kisses her.*)

(*The Gipsies depart, leaving only a few couples in the room, FEDYA with MASHA, AFREMOV with the Gipsy woman, KATYA, and the OFFICER with another girl, GASHA. The MUSICIAN is still scribbling. A Gipsy softly playing a valse tune on his guitar.*)

FEDYA.

But I'm married. And your band wouldn't let you...

MASHA.

Band is band, and heart is heart. I love whom I choose.
And I hate whom I choose.

FEDYA.

How happy I feel. And you?

MASHA.

Of course, I am happy. When the guests are good,
we too feel gay.

(Enter a MALE GIPSY.)

GIPSY.

(To FEDYA.) A gentleman is asking to see you.

FEDYA.

What sort of a gentleman?

GIPSY.

I don't know. Well dressed, sable fur coat.

FEDYA.

A swell, eh? Well, ask him in.

(Exit GIPSY.)

AFREMOV.

Who on earth wants to see you here?

FEDYA.

God only knows. Who can want me anyway?

(Enter KARENIN, looking about.)

FEDYA.

Ah, Victor! What wind has blown you in? Sit down. You shall hear "*Not the Shades of Night.*"

KARENIN.

Je voudrais vous parler sans témoins.)*

FEDYA.

About what?

KARENIN.

*Je viens de chez vous. Votre femme m'a chargé de cette lettre, et puis...**)*

FEDYA.

(Takes the letter, reads it, frowns, then smiles tenderly.) I say, Karenin, you doubtless know what is in this note?

KARENIN.

I do, and I should like to say...

FEDYA.

Wait, wait. Please dont' think that I am drunk and

*) I should like to speak to you without witnesses.

**) I come from your house. Your wife asked me to give you this letter and...

that my words are unaccountable, I mean to say that I am not accountable for my words. It's true that I am drunk, but in this matter I see everything very, very clearly. Well, what were you instructed to communicate to me?

KARENIN.

I was instructed to find you and to tell you... that... she... is waiting.... for you.... She asks you to forget all and to come back.

FEDYA.

(*Listens in silence, eyeing him intently.*) Still I can't understand why you?

KARENIN.

Elisaveta Andreyevna sent for me and asked me..

FEDYA.

Then..

KARENIN.

But it is not so much in your wife's name as in my own that I ask you to come home with me.

FEDYA.

You're a better man than I am. What rubbish am I saying? It's very easy to be a better man than I am. I am a good-for-nothing, and you are a very, very good man. And for this very reason I shall not alter my decision. And not even for this reason alone. But I simply cannot and will not. How could I go back with you?

KARENIN.

Come to my house now. I shall tell her that you are coming back, and to-morrow....

FEDYA.

And to-morrow what? I shall still be what I am, and she what she is. No. (*Walks over to the table and takes a drink.*) It is best to pull out a tooth with one yank. Had I not told her that in case I failed to keep my word she should cast me off? I have failed to keep my word, and all is finished.

KARENIN.

It may be as far as you are concerned, but not for her.

FEDYA.

How very strange that you should take such pains to prevent a dissolution of our marriage.

(KARENIN *about to say something, but checks himself.* Enter MASHA.)

FEDYA.

(*Interrupting him.*) You'd better listen. You'd better listen. Masha, sing.

(*The Gipsies return into the room.*)

MASHA.

(*Whispers.*) We ought to serenade him.

FEDYA.

(*Laughing.*) Go ahead, serenade him, sing: "*Victor Mikhailovitch, sir.*"*)

(*The Gipsies sing. KARENIN listens in embarrassment, then inquires how much to give to the minstrels.*)

FEDYA.

Give them twenty-five roubles.

(*KARENIN gives them the money.*)

FEDYA.

Wonderful. And now sing "*Flax*".

(*The Gipsies sing.*)

FEDYA.

(*Looking around.*) Karenin has skipped? Well, to hell with him.

(*The Gipsies disperse again.*)

FEDYA.

(*Sits down close to MASHA.*) Do you know who that was?

MASHA.

I heard his name.

*) A Gipsy custom, in the manner of the Anglo-Saxon "For he's a jolly good fellow" or the American "Who's all right?" This is a prelude to a generous tip.

FEDYA.

He is a very fine man. He came here to take me back to my wife. She loves me, stupid fool that I am, and look how I behave!

MASHA.

Why that's not right. You ought to go back to her. You ought to feel sorry for her.

FEDYA.

You think I ought to go back? And I think I ought not.

MASHA.

Of course, if you don't love her, then you're right, but love is a precious thing.

FEDYA.

How do you know?

MASHA.

Well, I evidently do know.

FEDYA.

Then give me a kiss. And now let us have "*Flax*" and no more after that.

(*The Gipsies commence to sing again.*)

FEDYA.

Oh, how beautiful... If only there were no awaking... Only to die like this...

ACT II.

SCENE I.

PROTASOV'S residence. Two weeks have elapsed.

CHARACTERS.

LISA.

KARENIN.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

SASHA.

DOCTOR.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Two weeks have passed since ACT I. At LISA'S. KARENIN and ANNA PAVLOVNA seated in the dining room.
Enter SASHA.

KARENIN.

Well, what's the news?

SASHA.

The doctor says the child is out of danger. The thing to do is to guard it from catching cold.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

But Lisa is all worn out.

SASHA.

He says it's not the true whooping cough, and the attack is mild. But what is this? (*Pointing to a basket.*)

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Victor has brought it. It's a basket of grapes.

KARENIN.

May I offer you some?

SASHA.

Thank you. Lisa is very fond of them. She has been so nervous of late.

KARENIN.

She has not slept a wink for two nights, and she won't eat a bite.

SASHA.

The same is true of you too. (*Smiles.*)

KARENIN.

I'm different, you see.

(Enter DOCTOR and LISA.)

DOCTOR.

(*Impressively.*) I repeat, change the compress every half hour if the child is awake. If he is asleep, don't trouble. It is not necessary to paint the throat. Keep the temperature in the room as....

LISA.

And if he should gasp for breath again?

DOCTOR.

I don't look for that. But in case he does, spray the throat. And besides give him one powder in the morning and one at night. I shall write the prescription.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Won't you have some tea, doctor?

DOCTOR.

No, thank you, I have patients waiting for me.

(SASHA brings pen and ink.)

LISA.

Are you sure it is not the whooping cough?

DOCTOR.

(Smiling.) Quite sure. (He writes.)

KARENIN.

(To LISA.) You'd better have some tea now, and then go and take a little rest. You look terrible.

LISA.

I'm all right now. Thank you. There's a true friend.
(Presses his hand. SASHA walks away angrily.)

KARENIN.

What have I done? I certainly deserve no thanks.

LISA.

And who has spent these nights without sleep? Who has brought the famous specialist?

KARENIN.

Why, I'm simply rewarded both by the news that Micka*) is out of danger and by your graciousness.

*) Pet name for Mikhail (Michael).

LISA.

(Pressing his hand again, opens her hand and laughingly exposes some bills which she had hidden in her palm.) This is for the doctor, only I never know how to do this without a feeling of awkwardness.

KARENIN.

Neither do I.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Neither do you what?

LISA.

Know how to offer money to a doctor. He has more than saved my life, and I give him a piece of money. There's something incongruous about this idea.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Let me do it. I know how. It's very simple.

DOCTOR.

(Rising and handing over the prescriptions.) These powders are to be given in a tablespoonful of distilled water, well stirred and *(he continues to give directions.)*

(KARENIN drinking tea at the table. ANNA PAVLOVNA and SASHA come forward.)

SASHA.

I cannot bear to see their attitude towards one another. She seems to be in love with him.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Is this so surprising?

SASHA.

It's disgusting.

(*Exit Doctor, shaking hands all around.*
ANNA PAVLOVNA sees him off.)

LISA.

(*To KARENIN.*) He is so sweet now. The moment he was relieved he began to smile and prattle. I shall go to him now, though I hate to leave you.

KARENIN.

But take some tea, eat something.

LISA.

I don't want anything. I am so happy after all this anxiety. (*She sobs.*)

KARENIN.

See how weak you are.

LISA.

I am happy. Would you like to see him?

KARENIN.

Certainly.

LISA.

Then come. (Exit.)

(ANNA PAVLOVNA *returns to SASHA*.)

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Pray, why are you scowling? I just handed him the money, and he took it.

SASHA.

It's disgusting. She has dragged him now to the nursery. You might think he was her fiancé or her husband.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

What is that to you? Why are you so wrought up? You have not been thinking of marrying him yourself?

SASHA.

I? Marry this milestone? I would rather marry anybody else but him. Such a thought has never even entered my mind. I only feel disgusted to think that after Fedyá, Lisa could have anything to do with a stranger.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

He is no stranger, he is an old time friend.

SASHA.

But I see from the smiles and the glances which they exchange that they are in love.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Is it surprising? The man has shown sympathy with her in her baby's illness, has been solicitous, helpful, and she's simply grateful. And moreover why should she not love and marry Victor?

SASHA.

That would be abominable, disgusting. Yes, disgusting.

(KARENIN and LISA pass through on their way out. KARENIN bows himself out. SASHA walks away angrily.)

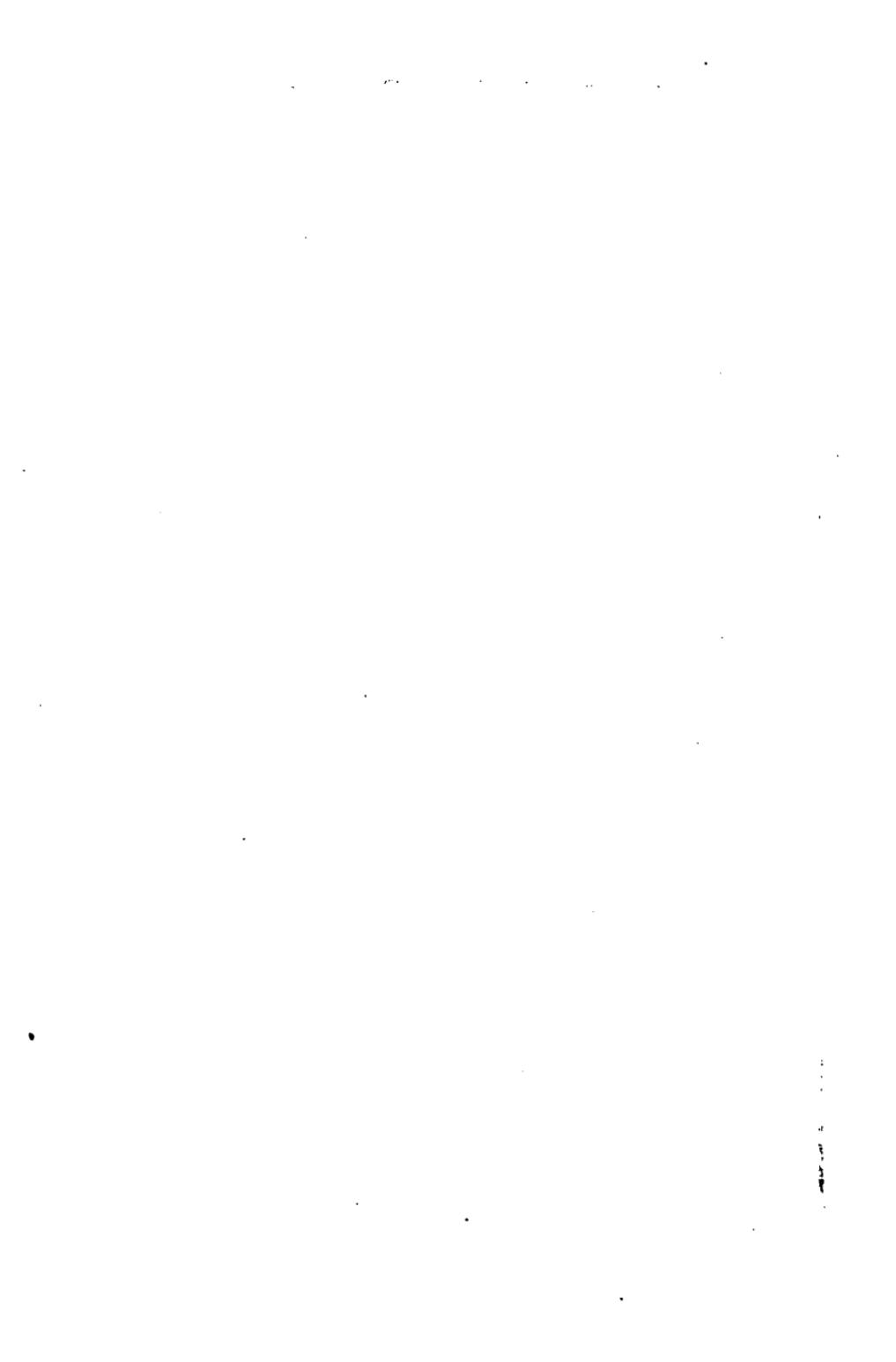
LISA.

What is the matter with her?

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

I really do not know.

(LISA sighs without saying a word.)



ACT II.

SCENE II.

Den in AFREMOV's house.

CHARACTERS.

FEDYA.

AFREMOV.

AFREMOV'S GUESTS:

STAKHOV, a man with shaggy hair.

BUTKEVITCH, a clean shaven man.

KOROTKOV, a dissipated looking man.

SASHA.

AFREMOV'S BUTLER.



ACT II.

SCENE II.

Den in AFREMOV's house. Wine-filled glasses. Guests. AFREMOV, FEDYA, STAKHOV (with shaggy hair), BUTKEVITCH, 'clean shaven'), and KOROTKOV, looking dissipated.

KOROTKOV.

I tell you he will be left at the post. *La Belle Bois* is the fastest horse in Europe.

STAKHOV.

That will be about all from you. You know nobody believes you anyway. And no one is going to bet.

KOROTKOV.

And I am telling you that your *Cartouche* will be left at the post.

AFREMOV.

Quit your arguing. I will be the peacemaker. Ask Fedya. He will set you right.

FEDYA.

Both horses are good, it's a question of jockeys.

STAKHOV.

Gussev is a crook. He will bear watching.

KOROTKOV.

(*Shouting.*) No, that's not so.

FEDYA.

Wait, I'll settle this dispute. Who won the Derby?

KOROTKOV.

I know, but isn't worth a rap just the same. It was an accident. If Crochus hadn't been taken sick— Now look here.

(*Enter BUTLER.*)

AFREMOV.

What is it?

BUTLER.

A lady is here, asking for Feodor Vasilyevitch.

AFREMOV.

Who is she? A *lady*, you say?

BUTLER.

I don't know, sir. But she's a real lady.

AFREMOV.

Fedya, a lady to see you.

FEDYA.

(*Alarmed.*) Who is it?

AFREMOV.

He doesn't know.

BUTLER.

Shall I show her into the parlor, sir?

FEDYA.

No, wait, I'll go and see.

(*Exeunt FEDYA and BUTLER.*)

KOROTKOV.

Who can it be? I bet it is Mashka.*)

STAKHOV.

What Mashka?

KOROTKOV.

Masha**), the Gipsy girl. She's in love with him, she's simply stuck on him.

STAKHOV.

She's a little beauty. And what a voice!

*) Mashka—a vulgar diminutive for Mary.

**) Masha—a politer diminutive for Mary.

AFREMOV.

Wonderful. She and Taniusha*) are a pair. They sang last night with Peter....

STAKHOV.

What a lucky fellow....

AFREMOV.

Just because the women run after him? He's welcome to them.

KOROTKOV.

I have no use for these Gipsy women. They are coarse.

BUTKEVITCH.

Don't say that.

KOROTKOV.

I would swap the whole lot of them for one French girl.

AFREMOV.

Oh yes, you're noted for estheticism. But I think I'll go and see who that was. (*Exit.*)

STAKHOV.

It it's Masha, bring her in, let her give us a song. No, the gipsies to-day are not what they used to be. There was one—Taniushka. Damn it—there was a girl for you.

*) Diminutive for Tatiana.

BUTKEVITCH.

I don't find much difference.

STAKHOV.

But there *is* a lot of difference. Nowadays they give you cheap sentimental hits instead of real old time Gipsy folk songs.

BUTKEVITCH.

There are some very fine sentimental hits.

KOROTKOV.

I bet you I can get them to sing and you won't know a real Gipsy song from a sentimental ballad.

STAKHOV.

Korotkov with his everlasting bets!

(Enter AFREMOV.)

AFREMOV.

Gentlemen, it is not Masha. And there is no place to receive her but right here, so let's go into the billiard room. (Exeunt all.)

(Enter FEDYA and SASHA.)

SASHA.

(Embarrassed.) Fedya, forgive me, if this annoys you, but for God's sake listen to me. (Her voice trembles. FEDYA paces up and down the room.)

SASHA.

Fedyá, come home.

FEDYA.

Listen, Sasha, I understand you very well. In your place, my dear, I should do just as you have done. I should try to get things back where they were before; but if you were in my place, sweet and fine-feeling girl that you are, though it may sound strange, you would surely act as I do: you would go and cease being a hindrance to the life of others.

SASHA.

What do you mean by a hindrance? Can Lisa live without you?

FEDYA.

Oh, but she can, Sasha, dear, she can, indeed, and be happy too, much happier than with me.

SASHA.

Never.

FEDYA.

You only think so. (*Holding her hand.*) But that's not the point. The point is that I can't do it. You know you can bend a piece of cardboard a hundred times perhaps without breaking it. But do it once too often and it will break. It's the same between Lisa and myself. It breaks my heart to look into her eyes. And she is in the same fix.

SASHA.

I can only judge by myself. If I were in her place and you gave me the answer you give me now, I should feel terrible.

FEDYA.

Yes, *you* might.. (They lapse into embarrassed silence.)

SASHA.

(Rising.) And can it be that things are to be left as they are?

FEDYA.

It looks so.

SASHA.

Fedy, come home.

FEDYA.

Thank you, dear Sasha, you will always remain a sweet memory. But good-bye, my dear. Let me give you a kiss. (Kisses her upon her brow.)

SASHA.

(In agitation.) No, I shan't say good-bye, I don't believe it, I can't believe it... Fedy..

FEDYA.

But listen to me. Only promise me on your word never to tell a living soul what I am going to say to you. Do you promise?

SASHA.

I certainly do.

FEDYA.

Then listen, Sasha. It is true that I am her husband, father of the child, but I am in the way. Wait, wait, don't contradict. You think I am jealous? Not a bit of it. In the first place I have no right to be, in the second I have no cause: Victor Karenin is her old friend and mine also. And he loves her, and she loves him also.

SASHA.

No, it is not so.

FEDYA.

She loves him, though only like a moral and honorable wife who will not permit herself to confess any love excepting for her own husband. But nevertheless she loves him, and will love him when this obstacle (*he points to himself*) is out of the way, and I will put it out of the way, and they shall be happy. (*His voice trembles.*)

SASHA.

Fedya, don't talk like that.

FEDYA.

You know that this is the truth, and I shall rejoice in their happiness, nor could I do anything better than that. I shall not return, I shall give them their freedom.. you may tell them so. No, don't say a word, don't say a word, but good-bye. (*Kisses her brow and opens the door for her.*)

SASHA.

Fedya, I think you are wonderful.

FEDYA.

Good-bye, good-bye. (*Exit SASHA.*)

FEDYA.

(*Alone.*) Yes, yes, it's fine so.. it's wonderful.. (*Rings the bell. Enter BUTLER.*) Call your master. (*Exit BUTLER.*) And it's the truth. It's the truth. (*Enter AFREMOV.*) Let's go.

AFREMOV.

Well, how did you settle matters?

FEDYA.

Perfectly lovely. "*With solemn oaths and adjurations.*" Perfectly grand. Where's the gang?

AFREMOV.

They're playing in the billiard room.

FEDYA.

Excellent, let us join them for an hour.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

CHARACTERS.

KARENIN.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA KARENINA, his mother, a society leader, 50 years old, but trying to appear younger. Intersperses her speech with French phrases.

PRINCE SERGHEI DMITRIEVITCH ABRESKOV, bachelor, 60 years old, with mustache, otherwise clean-shaven. An ex-officer, with military, very dignified, somewhat melancholy bearing.

LISA.

MALE SERVANT.

Anna Dmitrievna Karenina—Madame Anna Karenin.

Dmitrievna—daughter of Dmitri—Demetrius.

Serghei (pronounced Sir-gay) Dmit’-ri-ev-itsh—Sergius, son of Demetrius.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA'S boudoir, furnished in a severely elegant style and full of personal souvenirs. ANNA DMITRIEVNA is writing a letter. Enter MALE SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Prince Serghei Dmitrievitch.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Ask him in, of course. (She turns and arranges her hair before the mirror. (Enter PRINCE ABRESKOV.)

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

J'espère que je ne force pas la consigne).* (Kisses her hand.)

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

You know *vous êtes toujours le bienvenu.*** And particularly to-day. Did you get my note?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I did, and my presence is the answer.

**) I trust I am not intruding.*

***) You are always welcome.*

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Ah, my dear friend, I am beginning to give way to despair. *Il est ensorcelé, positivement ensorcelé**). I never found him so insistent, so obstinate, so pitiless and so indifferent to me before. He has been a different man since that woman cast off her husband.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Well what now? What is the state of affairs to-day?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

He means to marry her at all costs.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

But how about her husband?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

He consents to a divorce.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Is that right?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

And Victor is satisfied, in spite of all the dirty business, lawyers and proofs of guilt. *Tout ça est dégoutant.***) And yet it does not seem to repel him. I cannot make him out. With his innate delicacy and bashfulness.

*) He is bewitched, positively bewitched.

**) This is all so disgusting.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

He is in love. And if a man is truly in love...

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

But in our day love was a pure affection, a chummy love that lasted all through life. That's a sort of love which I can understand and respect.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

The younger generation is no longer content with such idealistic relations. *La possession de l'âme ne leur suffit plus**). What can you do? And what's to be done about Victor?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Don't say a word about him. It's black magic. He's a changeling. You know I called on her. He had begged me so. I called, but she was out and I left my card. *Elle m'a fait demander si je ne pouvais la recevoir***). And to-day (she looks at the clock) at two o'clock she is due to be here. I promised Victor I would receive her, but imagine my position. I am not myself. And by force of habit I have sent for you. I need your help.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Thank you.

*) They are no longer content to possess the soul.

**) She inquired if I would receive her.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Understand, this visit is to decide everything. It decides Victor's fate. I must either refuse my consent—but how can I?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

You are not even acquainted with her?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

I have never seen her in my life. But I am afraid of her. A good woman cannot consent to leave her husband, if he is the right sort of a man. He was a chum of Victor's and used to call here. He was very charming. But whatever he might be, *quels que soient les torts qu'il a eus vis-à-vis d'elle***), it is not proper to leave one's husband. A woman must bear her cross. The one thing which I cannot understand is how Victor, with his convictions, can agree to marry a divorced woman. How often, and only lately, has he argued with Spitzin in my very presence and proved to him that divorce was contrary to true Christianity, and now he is advocating it himself. *Si elle a pu le charmer à un tel point...***). I am afraid of her. By the way, I have sent for you in order to hear what you have to say, and here I am doing all the talking. What do you think? Tell me. What is your opinion? What's to be done? Have you talked with Victor?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I have talked with him. And I think that he is in love with her, has grown into the habit of loving her, and that

*) Whatever wrongs he may have committed against her.

**) If she was able to charm him to such an extent.

this love has taken a very firm hold on him. And he is a man who is slow in forming decisions, but adheres to them firmly. That which once enters his heart is there to stay. He will never love any other woman and will not be happy without her.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

But how gladly Varya*) Kasantseva would have married him. And what a wonderful girl she is, and how devoted to him.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

(Smiling.) *C'est compter sans son hôte***). That's altogether impossible now. And I think the best thing to do is to give in and to help him to marry.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

To help him to marry a divorced woman, with the possibility of meeting her husband socially? I cannot understand how you can calmly discuss such a possibility. Is she a woman whom a mother would wish to be the wife of her only son, and such a son as Victor?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

But what can you do, dear friend? Of course, it would have been better if he had married a girl whom you knew and liked. But if this is not possible? And besides he is not trying to marry some Gipsy woman or God knows whom. Lisa Protasova is a very fine, sweet woman. I

*) Var'-ya, diminutive for Varvara—Barbara.

**) That's figuring without the landlord.

know her through my niece Nellie: she is a gentle, kindly, affectionate woman of good morals.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Good morals, indeed! A woman who can make up her mind to cast off her husband?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I do not recognize you: so unkind, so cruel. Her husband is one of those men who may be termed their own worst enemies. But he was still more of an enemy to his wife. He is a weak, fallen, drink degraded creature. He had squandered all of his fortune, all of her possessions, and she has a child. How can you condemn a woman for leaving a man like that? And as a matter of fact it was he who left her, and not she.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

But this filth, this filth, and I must soil myself with it.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

And your religion?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Yes, I know, forgive. "As we forgive those who trespass against us." *Mais c'est plus fort que moi.**)

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

But how could she live with a man like that? Even if she did not love another, she would have been bound to

*) But that's too much for me.

leave him for the child's sake. And her husband, who is a bright and kindly man when in his right senses, gives her the same advice.

(Enter VICTOR; *he kisses his mother's hand and salutes PRINCE ABRESKOV.*)

VICTOR.

Mama, I have come to tell you only one thing: Elisaveta Andreyevna will be here directly. I only beg and implore you, if you are still opposed to my marriage...

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

(*Interrupts him.*) Of course, I am still opposed to it.

VICTOR.

(*Continues with a frown.*) Then dont' say a word of your opposition, don't tell her that you disapprove.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

I hardly think that we will discuss anything like that. I certainly shall not bring up this topic.

VICTOR.

She is still less likely to. I only wanted you to know her.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

There is only one thing which I cannot understand: how do you reconcile your desire to marry Madame Protasova, while her husband is still living, with your religious belief that divorce is contrary to Christianity?

VICTOR.

Mama, this is cruel on your part. Are we all so infallible that we may not deviate from our convictions when life is so complex a thing? Mama, why are you so cruel to me?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Because I love you and desire your happiness.

VICTOR.

(To ABRESKOV.) Serghei Dmitrievitch!

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Of course you desire his happiness, but it is hard for us greyheads to understand youth. And it is particularly hard for a mother who had accustomed herself to her own plans for her son's happiness. All women are like that.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

That's just it. You are all against me. Of course, you have the right to do it, *vous êtes majeur.**) But you will be the death of me.

VICTOR.

I do not recognize you. This is worse than cruelty.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

worse than she acts.

^{*)} You are of age.

(To VICTOR.) Stop, Victor. Your mother always talks

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

I shall tell her what I think and feel, and shall contrive to do so without hurting her feelings.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I am quite sure of that.

(*Enter SERVANT.*)

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Here she is.

VICTOR.

I had better leave.

SERVANT.

Madame Elisaveta Andreyevna Protasova.

VICTOR.

I am going. Mama, I beg of you.....

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Ask her in. (*To PRINCE ABRESKOV.*) No, you had better remain.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I thought you might find it easier to speak with her in private.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

No, I am afraid. (*Fussing.*) Should I want to remain alone with her I shall give you a wink. *Ça dépendra.**) But to remain alone with her from the start would be irksome. When I want you to leave the room I shall give you a sign like this. (*She makes a sign.*)

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I shall understand. I am sure you will like her. Only be just.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Oh, but how you are all against me.

(Enter LISA in hat and street costume.)

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

(*Rising.*) I was so sorry that you were not in when I called, but I see you are kind enough to look me up.

LISA.

I had not been expecting you. I am so grateful that you expressed the desire to see me.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Are you acquainted? (*Pointing to PRINCE ABRESKOV.*)

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Yes, indeed, I once had the honor of an introduction (*Shakes hands, sits down.*) My niece Nellie frequently speaks of you.

**) That will depend.*

LISA.

We were great chums once (*looking timidly at ANNA DMITRIEVNA*).... we still are.. (*To ANNA DMITRIEVNA.*) I never expected that you would want to see me.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

I knew your husband well. He was a friend of Victor's and used to call here often before his transfer to Tambov. It was there that he married you?

LISA.

Yes, we were married in Tambov.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

But when he returned to Moscow he ceased to call.

LISA.

He hardly made any visits at all.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Nor did he make me acquainted with you. (*Embarrassed pause.*)

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

The last time I saw you was at the Denisov theatrical. A very pleasant occasion. You were in the cast, too.

LISA.

No.. But yes.. I remember. I played. (*Another pause.*) Please forgive me if my words should annoy, if

what I am about to say should prove displeasing to you.. . But I am not good at pretending, I don't know how. I have come because Victor Mikhaïlovitch told me.. . because he.. . because you wanted to see me.. . but it is best to have it all threshed out.. . (*Sobs.*) It is very painful to me, and you are so good.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I think I had better go.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Yes, go.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Good-bye. (*Exit, bowing to the ladies.*)

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Listen, Lisa, I don't know your formal patronymic, but I don't even want to know it.

LISA.

Andreyevna.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

No matter, let it be plain Lisa. I feel sorry for you, I like you. But I love Victor. I love only one being on earth. I know his soul as I do my own. He was proud while a lad of seven. Proud not of his name, of his wealth, but proud of his purity, of his high ideals. He guarded them jealously. He is as pure as an innocent girl.

LISA.

I know it.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

He never loved a woman. You are the first. I won't say that I am not jealous of you. I am. But we mothers—your own baby is so young, so it's too soon for you to know—prepare ourselves for this. I was prepared to yield him to his wife without feeling jealous. But I meant to give him up to one as pure as himself.

LISA.

I... but am I...

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Forgive me, I know that you are not to blame, that you are unfortunate. But I know him too. Now he is ready to bear and bear everything without saying a word, but he will suffer. His injured pride is bound to suffer, and he will be unhappy.

LISA.

I have thought of that myself.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Lisa, my dear, you are a bright and a good woman. If you truly love him, you must desire his happiness more than your own. If this is the case, you will not want to bind him or to put him in a position where he is sure to face remorse. Although he will never, never say a word.

LISA.

I know he never will. I have also thought of this and have asked myself this question. I have thought of it. I have discussed it with him. But what can I do if he says that he cannot live without me? I told him: let us be friends, but shape your own life, do not entangle your own clean life with my broken existence. But he will not listen.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Not at the present moment.

LISA.

Talk him into giving me up. I am agreed. I love him for his own sake and nor for my own happiness. Only help me and don't hate me. Let us both lovingly seek his happiness.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Yes, I have come to love you. (*Kisses her. Lisa weeps.*) But still, still, it is terrible. If he had loved you before you married..

LISA.

He says that he loved me even then, but did not wish to stand in the way of his friend's happiness.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

How unfortunate it all is. But none the less let us love one another and God will help us to find that which we seek.

(*Enter VICTOR.*)

VICTOR.

Mother, dear... I have heard everything. I knew you would love her. And now all will be well.

LISA.

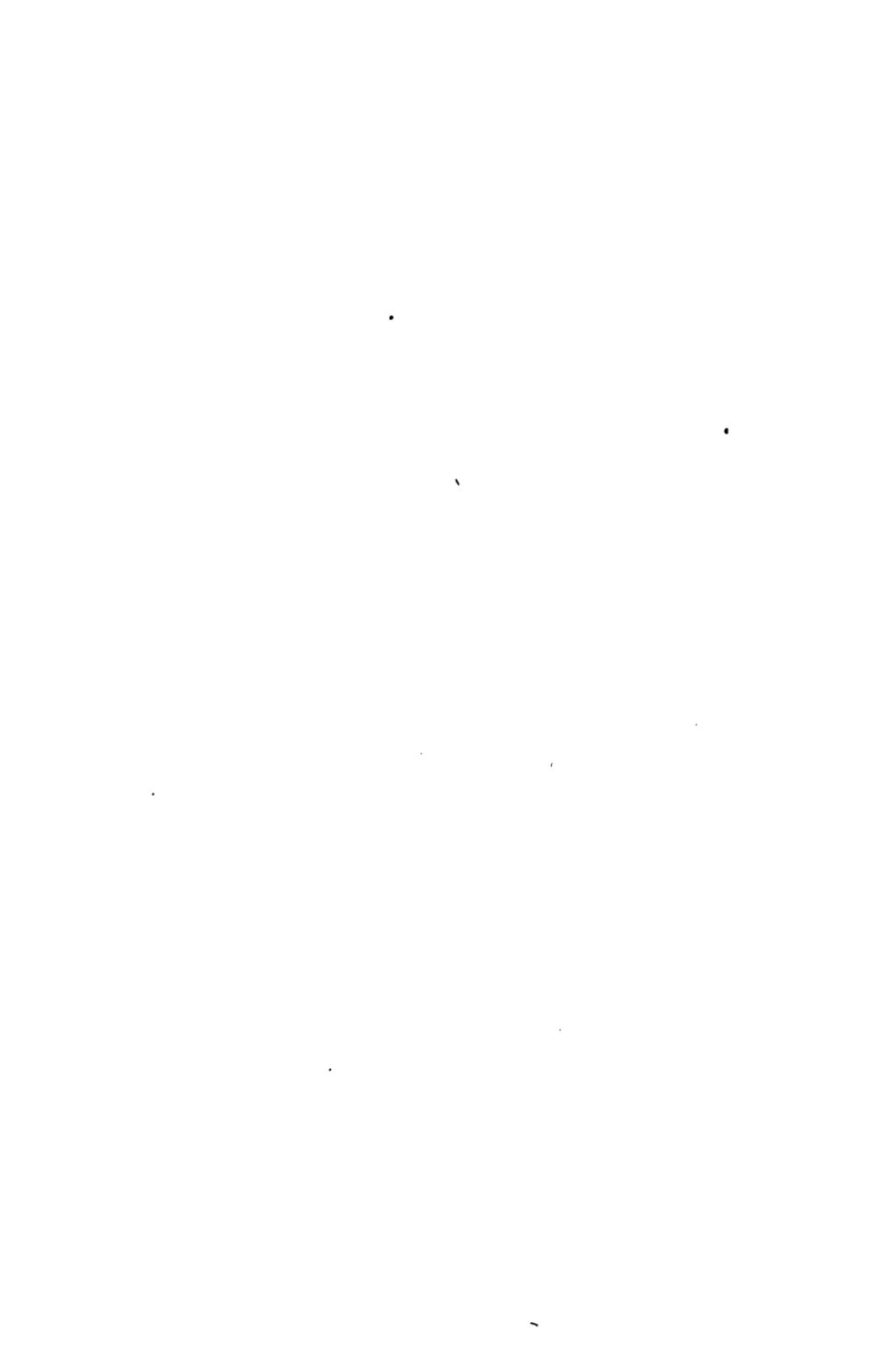
I am sorry you heard everything, I should not have spoken as I did.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Still nothing is settled yet. I can only say that but for these unfortunate circumstances, I should have been very glad indeed... (Kisses LISA.)

VICTOR.

Only please don't change your mind.



ACT III.

SCENE II.

FEDYA'S *apartment.*

CHARACTERS.

FEDYA.

SASHA.

IVAN MAKAROVITCH, an old Gipsy, Masha's father.

NASTASIA IVANOVNA, a Gipsy, Masha's mother.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Ivan—John.

Makar'-ovitch—son of Macarius.

Nastas'-ia—Anastasia.

Ivan'-ovna—daughter of John.



ACT III.

SCENE II.

FEDYA's apartment. A modestly furnished room with a bed, writing table and a sofa. FEDYA is alone. A knock.

(MASHA's voice behind the door.) Why have you locked yourself in, Feodor Vasiyevitch? Please open the door, Fedya.

FEDYA.

(Rises, opens the door.) I'm glad you came. I have a terrible fit of the blues.

MASHA.

Why don't you come around? Drinking again, I see. You're a fine one. What about your promise?

FEDYA.

You know what? I'm broke.

MASHA.

Oh why did I ever fall in love with you?

FEDYA.

Masha!

MASHA.

Masha! Masha! If you loved me, you would have got a divorce long ago. They even begged you for it. And you admit yourself you don't love her. But still you hang on to her. I see you don't want to...

FEDYA.

You know well why I don't.

MASHA.

That's all rubbish. They are right when they say that you are a windbag.

FEDYA.

What should I say? That your words pain me? You know that yourself.

MASHA.

Nothing pains you.

FEDYA.

You know well that I have only one joy in life, and that is your love.

MASHA.

My love—that's all right; but where is yours?

FEDYA.

I shan't try to assure you. What's the use? You know it yourself.

MASHA.

Fedya, why do you torture me?

FEDYA.

I think it's the other way about.

MASHA.

(Weeping.) You are no good.

FEDYA.

(Embracing her.) Masha! Why are you crying? Don't, please. You're the last one to have need of tears, my beautiful darling.

MASHA.

Do you love me?

FEDYA.

Whom else should I love?

MASHA.

You love me only? And now read me what you have written.

FEDYA.

It's too dry for you.

MASHA.

Since you have written it, it is bound to please me.

FEDYA.

Very well then, listen: (*Reads.*) "It was late in the autumn; my comrade and I had agreed to meet at the Murigin Landing. This landing was on a fortified islet, with re-enforced embankments. It was a bleak day, but warm and windless. The fog...."

(Enter the two Gipsies, MASHA's parents.)

NASTASIA IVANOVNA.

(*Advancing threateningly.*) So here you are, you dam' lost sheep? (*To FEDYA.*) My compliments to you, sir. (*To the daughter.*) What are you doing to us? Eh?

IVAN MAKAROVITCH.

(*To FEDYA.*) You're not acting right, sir. You're driving the girl to ruin. Very wrong of you. It's a dirty trick.

NASTASIA IVANOVNA.

Put on your shawl; off with you. A runaway, just think of it! What'll I say to the band, eh? Tying yourself up with a bum. What can you get out of him?

MASHA.

Tying myself up, nothing. I love the gentleman, and that's all, and I'm not giving up the band, I'll sing, and as for..

IVAN MAKAROVITCH.

If you say much, I'll pull your hair out by the roots, you slut. Whom do you take your example from? Not

from your father, nor your mother, nor your aunt. (*To FEDYA.*) And you have done us a mean turn, sir. We all liked you. All felt sorry for you. How often did we sing for you without pay? And now see what you've gone and done.

NASTASIA IVANOVNA.

You've ruined my little girl for nothing in the world; my own and only one, my precious one; my priceless jewel; you've dragged her in the mire, that's what you've done. You've no fear of God in your heart.

FEDYA.

Listen, Nastasia Ivanovna, you're all wrong. I've treated your daughter like my own sister. I've guarded her honor. Don't harbor any wrong thoughts. I love her.. But what can I do?

IVAN MAKAROVITCH.

You didn't talk of love when you had money. You should have taken a ten thousand rouble interest in the band, and could have had her honorably. Now you've squandered it all, and are trying to steal the girl. Shame on you, sir! Shame on you!

MASHA.

He hasn't tried to steal me, I came of my own accord. And if you take me away now, I'll come back anyway. I love him, that's all. My love is stronger than your locks. I shan't go....

IVAN MAKAROVITCH.

What's the use of arguing? Come on now. (*He takes MASHA's hand.*) Excuse us, sir. (*Exeunt Gipsies.*)

(Enter PRINCE ABRESKOV.)

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Pardon me, but I was the involuntary witness of a disagreeable scene.

FEDYA.

With whom have I the honor? (*Recognizing him.*) Ah, Prince Serghei Dmitrievitch. (*Shakes hands.*)

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Involuntary witness of a disagreeable scene. I should have preferred not to hear it. But having heard it, I think it my duty to let you know that I have. I was directed to this door and was compelled to wait until these people left. Moreover my knock remained unheard because of the noise of the argument.

FEDYA.

Just so. Please sit down. I am grateful to you for telling me. This justifies me in explaining this scene to you. What your opinion of me is, does not matter to me in the least. But I merely wanted to tell you that the reproaches which you heard in reference to this girl, who is a Gipsy minstrel, are baseless. She is morally as pure as a dove and my relations with her were purely friendly. If anything, they are a little tinged with poetry, but there is nothing to soil the purity of this woman's honor. This is

all I cared to convey to you. And what may you want with me? How can I be of service to you?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

In the first place, I...

FEDYA.

Pardon me, Prince. I have come down so low in the social scale that the superficial acquaintance of many years back hardly entitles me to the honor of your visit unless you have some business with me. What is it then?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I cannot deny that you have made a good guess. I have business with you. But still I want to assure you that the change in your position cannot have the slightest effect upon my attitude to you.

FEDYA.

I am convinced of that.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

The fact of the matter is that the son of my old friend Anna Dmitrievna Karenina, and the lady herself, have asked me to learn from you own lips the exact state of your relations—will you pardon me for speaking plainly? of your relations to your wife, Elisaveta Andreyevna Pro-tasova.

FEDYA.

My relations with my wife, I may say with my former wife, have been absolutely severed.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

That is what I understood. And only for that reason have I assumed this difficult mission.

FEDYA.

They have been severed, I hasten to state, not through any fault of hers, but through my own fault, or rather because of my innumerable faults. As far as she is concerned, she ever has been and still is a woman beyond any reproach.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Then Victor Karenin, and particularly his mother, begged me to learn from you the exact character of your intentions.

FEDYA.

(Angrily.) What intentions? I have no intentions whatever. I give her full freedom. What's more, I shall never intrude upon her peace of mind. I know that she loves Victor Karenin. Very well. I consider him a somewhat tiresome, but an excellent and honorable man, and I think that she will be very happy with him, which is the usual phrase for such occasions. "*Que le bon Dieu les bénisse.*"*) That's all.

*) God bless them.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Yes, but we..

FEDYA.

(*Interrupts.*) And don't think for a moment that I harbor the slightest feeling of jealousy. If I said about Victor that he was tiresome, I take it back. He is a very fine and honorable man, of excellent moral principles, almost my complete antithesis. He has loved her since childhood. Perhaps she loved him when she married me. Such things happen. Sometimes the truest love is the love of which one is totally unaware. I think she had always loved him like that. Though, being an honorable woman, and after she married, she never admitted the fact even to herself. And that thing.. it had cast a sort of a pall over our marriage relation.. But here I am making a confession to you...

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Go ahead, make it. Believe me that the most essential thing for me in this present visit is my desire to obtain a clear insight into these relations. I quite understand you. I can well see how such a pall, as you so beautifully put it, might have hung over your married life.

FEDYA.

Yes, it did, and perhaps that was the reason why I found no satisfaction in the home life which she offered me, and why I sought for something else, gave way to infatuations. But it looks as though I were trying to clear myself. I don't want to, nor have I any right to. I can bluntly say that I was a bad husband, I say I *was*, because

in my consciousness I ceased being a husband long ago. I consider her a perfectly free woman, and this is my answer to your mission.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

But you know Victor's family and Victor himself. His relations with Elisaveta Andreyevna have always been and still remain most honorable and remote. He rendered her a little assistance when she found herself in difficulties...

FEDYA.

Yes, my profligacy helped them to get together. How could it be helped?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

You know the strictly orthodox religious views of the Karenins. I don't share them myself. I look at things from a broader point of view. But I respect them and understand them. I understand that neither he, nor particularly his mother, could think of a union with a woman without a church wedding.

FEDYA.

Yes I know his stupid—his straightlaced conservatism in this respect. Well, what do they want? A divorce? I told them long ago that I was willing to give it to them, but the condition of taking the guilt on my shoulders, and all the falsehoods that must go with it, is very difficult.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I understand you thoroughly and share your views. But what's to be done? I think that this could be arranged. Still, you're right. It's terrible, and I understand you.

FEDYA.

(Pressing his hand.) Thank you, dear Prince. I always regarded you as a man of honor and a gentleman. Tell me now what to do. How to do it? Enter into my situation. I am not trying to appear better than I am. I am a good-for-nothing. But there are things which I cannot do with nonchalance. I cannot lie nonchalantly.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

You are a puzzle to me. You are a clever and a talented man with such a delicate sense of what is right. How could you become so infatuated, how could you become so oblivious of the demands of your own personality? What brought you to this? Why have you spoilt your own life?

FEDYA.

(Repressing tears of agitation.) I have lived this dissolute life for ten years. And for the first time in all these years has a man like you expressed a sympathetic interest in me. Companions of my debauches, wastrel men and women, have pitied me, but a good and sensible man like yourself.... Thank you. What was responsible for my downfall? In the first place—liquor. It is not that I like the taste of liquor. Whatever I do, I feel it's wrong, and I am ashamed. I am talking to you now and feel ashamed. But to be in the foreground, to be a bank director, would fill me with such shame, such shame... Only when I have tasted liquor I lose the feeling of shame. And then music—no operas or Beethoven, but Gipsy music. That makes my blood course madly in my veins. And those sparkling eyes of black, those smiles. And the more fascinating it all is, the deeper the sense of shame in the end.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Well, have you tried work?

FEDYA.

I have tried that too. It's no use. I am dissatisfied with everything. But what's the use of talking about myself? Thank you.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Then what am I to say?

FEDYA.

Tell them that I shall do as they wish. They want to marry, do they not? They desire to eliminate all obstacles in the way of their marriage?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Certainly.

FEDYA.

I'll do it, tell them I'll surely do it.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

But when? But when?

FEDYA.

Wait a moment... Let us say inside of two weeks? Will that suit them?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

(*Rising.*) And may I tell them so?

FEDYA.

You may. Good-bye, Prince, and thank you once more.

(*Exit PRINCE ABRESKOV.*)

FEDYA.

(*After a long pause, smiling.*) Fine, very fine. That's the right way. That's the right way.



ACT IV.

SCENE I.

CHARACTERS.

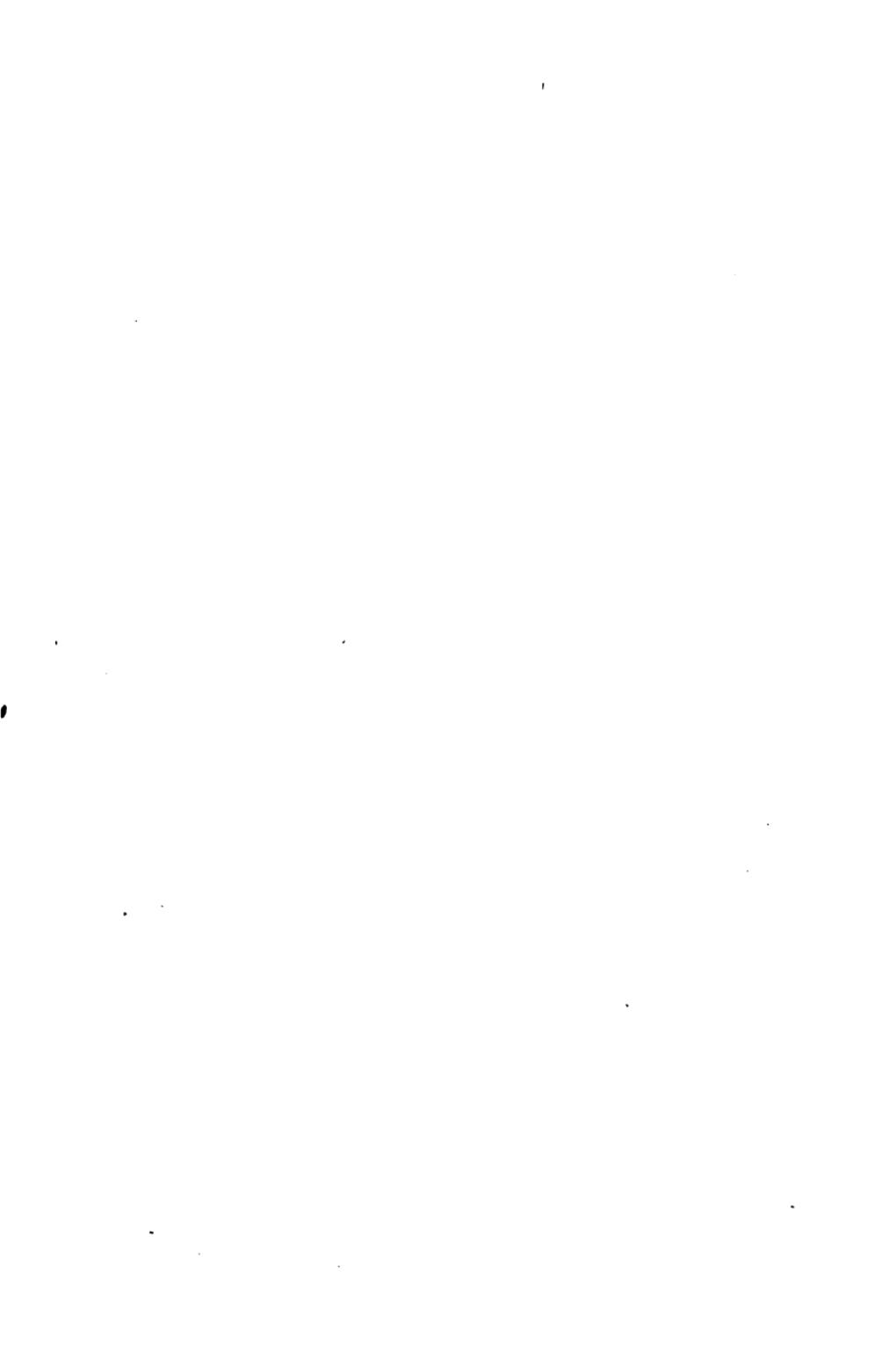
FEDYA.

IVAN PETROVITCH ALEXANDROV, a lover of alcohol.

MASHA.

A. WAITER.

Ivan' Petrov'-itch—John, son of Peter.



ACT IV.

SCENE I.

*Private room in a restaurant. Waiter shows in FEDYA.
IVAN PETROVITCH ALEXANDROV following on FEDYA's heels.*

WAITER.

This way, sir. No one will disturb you here, I will get you some writing paper.

IVAN PETROVITCH.

Protasov. I'll come in with you.

FEDYA.

(*Seriously.*) All right, if you want to, but I am busy... Still if you want to, come in.

IVAN PETROVITCH.

You want to make a reply to their demands? I'll tell you what to do. I should not make any bones about it. I always talk to the point and decisively.

FEDYA.

(*To the WAITER.*) Bring me a bottle of champagne. (FEDYA takes out a revolver and lays it on the table.) Wait awhile.

IVAN PETROVITCH.

What? Do you mean to shoot yourself? That may be done, yes, indeed. I understand you. They would humiliate you, and you show them what you are! You will kill yourself with a revolver and crush them with your magnanimity. I understand you, I understand everything because I am a genius.

FEDYA.

Yes, yes. Only... (*Enter WAITER with paper and inkwell.*)

FEDYA.

(*Covering the revolver with a serviette.*) Open a bottle. Let's have a drink. (*They drink. FEDYA writes.*) Wait a moment.

IVAN PETROVITCH.

I drink to your great journey. I am above such things, you know. I shall not hold you back. Life or death are one and the same to genius. I die in living and live in death. You will kill yourself to make these two persons feel sorry for you. And I shall kill myself so that the whole world may realize what it has lost. And I shall not hesitate or debate the point. I shall take this revolver (*snatching it from the table,*) just one pressure—and all is finished. But it is not yet time. (*Lays down the revolver.*) Nor need I write anything, they must realize it without any words of mine. You...

FEDYA.

(*Still writing.*) Wait awhile.....

IVAN PETROVITCH.

Wretched creatures, fussing and fidgeting, and never understanding, never understanding. I am not talking to you, I am just expressing my thoughts in general. What does mankind need? Very little: it need only appreciate its men of genius, but instead of that they put them to death, they persecute and torture them. No, I shall be your plaything no longer! I shall unmask you! No, you hypocrites.

FEDYA.

(Finishing writing.) And now, go away, please.

IVAN PETROVITCH.

Must I go? Good-bye then. I shall not try to dissuade you. I'll do the same. But it is not yet time. I only want to tell you.....

FEDYA.

Fine. You can tell me some other time. But now kindly give this to my landlord (*hands him a sum of money*) and ask for my mail and a parcel. Please.

IVAN PETROVITCH.

Very well. Then you'll wait for me? I have something very important to tell you. Something that you would not otherwise learn either in this world or in the next, or at least until I reach there myself. Then shall I give him all this money?

FEDYA.

Whatever is coming to him. (*Exit IVAN PETROVITCH.* FEDYA heaves a sigh of relief, locks the door, takes the

revolver, cocks it, holds it against his temple, then shivers and lets it down cautiously with a groan.) No, I cannot, I cannot, I cannot. (*A knock at the door.*) Who is there? (*MASHA's voice is heard behind the door.*) It's I.

FEDYA.

Who is "I"? Ah, it's Masha. (*Unlocks the door.*
Enter MASHA.)

MASHA.

I was over to your room, then to Popov's, to Afremov's and finally guessed that you might be here. (*Seeing the revolver.*) That's a fine how-do-you-do. Oh, but you are silly. A sure enough fool. Did you really mean to?

FEDYA.

No. I could not.

MASHA.

And how about me? Don't I exist? You sinner! Have you no pity for me? Ah, Feodor Vasilyevitch, it's a sin, it's a sin. In return for all my love...

FEDYA.

I wanted to set them free, I promised to. And I cannot lie.

MASHA.

But how about me?

FEDYA.

What about you? I should have freed you too. Is it better for you to bother with me?

MASHA.

Of course it is. I can't live without you.

FEDYA.

What sort of a life can you expect alongside of me?
And so you would have cried awhile and you still would
have your life before you.

MASHA.

I should not have shed a tear. To hell with you, if
you don't pity me. (*Weeping.*)

FEDYA.

Masha, dear, I meant it all for the best.

MASHA.

For *yourself*.

FEDYA.

(*Smiling.*) How do you make that out? Better for my-
self if I kill myself.

MASHA.

Of course. But what is it that's on your mind? Tell
me.

FEDYA.

What do you mean? A great many things.

MASHA.

What are they?

FEDYA.

In the first place, I must keep my word. That's the first thing, and it's a lot. I cannot lie and go through all those vile proceedings necessary for a divorce.

MASHA.

I admit that's the mean part. I myself..

FEDYA.

Then I must really set these two free, my wife and him too. They are good people. Why should they be unhappy? Thats' point number two.

MASHA.

I don't know what good you find in her when she cast you off.

FEDYA.

She did not cast me off; I left her.

MASHA.

All right, all right. It's all you. She is an angel. Well, what next?

FEDYA.

What next? Here you are, a dear, sweet girl. I love you, and if I remain I'll surely be your ruin.

MASHA.

That's not your business. I know perfectly well where I come in to be ruined.

FEDYA.

(*Sighing.*) And the main thing.. the main thing.. what's the good of my life anyway? Don't I see that I am a lost man, a good-for-nothing? I am a burden to myself, just as your father says. I am good for nothing.

MASHA.

What rubbish! You won't get rid of me so easily. I'll cling to you like a leech and that's all. What if you do lead an evil life, drinking and carousing? You are still alive, you can drop it all and be done with such things.

FEDYA.

It's easy for you to say it.

MASHA.

Just try it.

FEDYA.

Yes, when I look at you I think I can do everything.

MASHA.

And you will too. (*Noticing the letter.*) What is this? You wrote them? What did you write them?

FEDYA.

What I wrote them? (*Takes the letter and tries to tear it up.*) It's needless now.

MASHA.

(*Snatches the letter from his hands.*) You wrote them

that you'd kill yourself? Didn't you? But you didn't say a word about the revolver? You wrote that you'd kill yourself?

FEDYA.

Yes, that I'd be out of their way.

MASHA.

Let me have it, let me have it, let me have it! Have you ever read "*The Thing To Do*"?

FEDYA.

I think I have.

MASHA.

A stupid novel, but one point was very, very good. Rachmanov pretended that he had drowned himself. And you can do the same. You can't swim, can you?

FEDYA.

No.

MASHA.

There you are. Let me have your suit of clothes. Everything, your pocket-book too.

FEDYA.

What do you mean?

MASHA.

No, wait, wait, wait! Let's go home. You can change your clothes.

FEDYA.

But that would be a fraud.

MASHA.

What of it? You've gone out for a swim, left your clothes on the river bank. Your pocket-book and this letter in your pocket.

FEDYA.

Well, and then?

MASHA.

Well, and then? Then we'll go and we'll have one glorious time.

(Enter IVAN PETROVITCH.)

IVAN PETROVITCH.

That's how the land lies? Well, how about the revolver? I'll take it..

MASHA.

Take it away, and we're off.

ACT IV.

SCENE II.

PROTASOV'S *residence.*

CHARACTERS.

LISA.

KARENIN.

VOSNESSENSKY, his secretary.

MALE SERVANT.

NURSE.

LISA'S CHILD.

ACT IV.

SCENE II.

Drawing room of PROTASOV's residence.

KARENIN and LISA.

KARENIN.

He made such a definite promise that I am convinced he intends to keep his word.

LISA.

I am ashamed to say so but I confess that when I learned about the Gipsy woman I felt my full freedom return to me. I don't think it was jealousy. It was not jealousy, but it was a sense of deliverance, you know. How can I make it clear to you, Mr. Karenin?

KARENIN.

Always so formal...

LISA.

Victor, then. Don't interrupt me, don't hinder me in expressing my feelings. The thing that had troubled me most was that I loved two persons. That was to me a proof that I was an immoral woman.

KARENIN.

You—an immoral woman?!

LISA.

But since I learned that he had another woman, that he did not need me, I became free and felt that I could say without uttering a falsehood that I loved you. Now my soul is clear, and my position is the only thing that worries me. This divorce. It's such a painful matter. This feeling of uncertainty.

KARENIN.

It will be settled very, very soon. Besides his promise I asked my secretary to call on him with the divorce petition and not to leave his presence until he has signed it. If I did not know him as well as I do, I should have suspected that he had some purpose in torturing us.

LISA.

He? No, it's all his weakness of character and his personal honesty. He hates to tell an untruth. Only you made a mistake in sending him this money.

KARENIN.

I could not help it. Lack of money might have caused more delay.

LISA.

No, there's something degrading in sending him money.

KARENIN.

Well, by this time he might well be a little less scrupulous.

LISA.

How selfish we have become!

KARENIN.

Yes, I plead guilty, too. And you are guilty yourself. Our present happiness, you know, after this lingering wait, this state of hopelessness. Happiness makes people selfish. It's our own fault.

LISA.

You think it's only you? I, too, am guilty. I feel overwhelmed, I am wallowing in happiness. Everything has come my way: Micka has recovered, and your mother has learned to love me, you love me, and the main thing is I love, I love you.

KARENIN.

You do? Without regrets? Beyond recall?

LISA.

Since that day I have been inwardly transformed.

KARENIN.

And no chance for a reversal?

LISA.

Never, I hope that your mind is as definitely made up

as mine. (*Enter NURSE with CHILD. The little boy goes to his mother. She takes him up on her lap.*)

KARENIN.

How unlucky we are!

LISA.

What now? (*She kisses the child.*)

KARENIN.

When you married and I returned from abroad and learned the sad news, I felt that I had lost you forever, and I was very unhappy; and later it filled me with joy merely to discover that you had not forgotten me. I was content. Then when friendly relations were established between us, and I felt that you were cordial to me, that in our friendship there was a spark of something beyond mere friendship, I was almost happy. I was tormented only by the fear that I might not have been honorable towards Fedya. Yet I always cherished the firm conviction of the impossibility of any relations with the wife of my friend beyond a pure friendship—and I knew you too—and still I was content. Then when Fedya began to grieve you and I felt that I was a help to you, I was quite happy, and a sort of an indefinite hope was born in me. And when he became utterly impossible, and you decided to leave him; when for the first time I had the opportunity of telling you all, and you did not say no, but left me with tears in your eyes, my happiness was complete. And if someone had asked me that moment what else I wished for, I should have said I wished for nothing more. Finally the idea of a union assumed the form of possibility: mama loved you and ap-

proved of you, the potential commenced to approach reality, you told me that you had loved me in the past and loved me still, and just now you've said that he no longer existed for you and that you loved me alone—what more would there appear to be wished for? But no, now it's the past that gnaws at my heart, should be so glad if the past had not been, if there were nothing to remind me of him.

LISA.

(*Reproachfully.*) Victor..

KARENIN.

Lisa, forgive me, I said that only because I did not wish to harbor a thought that would remain a secret from you. I said that only to show you how evil I was and that I had reached the limit and that now I must struggle with myself to overcome myself. And I have overcome myself. I love him.

LISA.

That's right. I have done all I could. Not I, but my heart has accomplished all that you could wish for. All has vanished from it but you.

KARENIN.

All indeed?

LISA.

Absolutely all. I should not have made this statement otherwise.

(*Enter SERVANT.*)

SERVANT.

Mr. Vosnessensky.

KARENIN.

He's back with Fedya's answer.

LISA.

(To KARENIN.) Ask him to come here.

KARENIN.

(Rises and crosses to the door.) And here's the answer.

LISA.

(Hands the child to the nurse, kissing it.) Is it possible that this is the decision, Victor?

(Enter VOSNESSENSKY.)

KARENIN.

Well, what's the news?

VOSNESSENSKY.

He's gone.

KARENIN.

Gone? Hasn't he signed the petition?

VOSNESSENSKY.

No, the petition is not signed, but he left a letter for you and Elisaveta Andreyevna. (Taking a letter from his

pocket.) I had been to his apartment. I was told that he was in the restaurant. I went there. I found him and he asked me to come back for his answer in an hour. I returned and here it is.

KARENIN.

Can it be another delay? An evasion? No, that would be downright mean. How he has fallen!

LISA.

But read the letter, won't you?

KARENIN.

(*Opens the letter.*)

VOSNESSENSKY.

.. I am no longer wanted?

KARENIN.

No, good-bye. Thank you. (*He reads with startled amazement.*)

LISA.

Well, what does he say?

KARENIN.

That's terrible.

LISA.

(*Snatching the letter.*) Read.

KARENIN.

(Reads.) "Lisa and Victor, I address you both. I shall not lie and call you 'dear.' I cannot overcome a feeling of bitterness and reproach—a self-reproach, but nevertheless painful, when I think of you, of your love, of your happiness. I know all. I know that though I was the husband a series of circumstances had made me an obstacle in your way. *C'est moi qui suis l'intrus.)** Still I cannot overcome a feeling of bitterness and coolness towards you. In theory I love you both, particularly Lisa, my Lisanka, but in reality I am more than cold towards you both. I know that I am wrong, but I cannot change myself..."

LISA.

What ever is he driving at?

KARENIN.

(Continuing to read.) "But to come down to business. This very split in my feelings forces me to accomplish your will in a somewhat different way from what you had desired. To lie, to play a vile comedy, to give bribes to consistory officials, and low tricks of this kind—all this is abominable in my eyes. No matter how vile I am, mine is a different sort of vileness, and I cannot take part in this type of rascality, I simply cannot. There is another way out—which I have chosen and it is very simple: you must marry so as to be happy, I am in the way, therefore I must be destroyed."

LISA.

(Clutching at VICTOR's hand.) Victor!

*) I am the interloper.

KARENIN.

(Reads on.) "I must be destroyed. And I shall be destroyed. When you get this letter, I shall no longer be in existence. I very much regret that you should have sent me money for the expenses of the consistory proceedings. That was very distasteful to me and unlike you. But what's to be done? I have made so many mistakes, you have the right to make one. The money is being returned to you. My way out is simpler, cheaper and more certain. I only ask you for one thing: do not be angry with me and remember no evil of me. And another thing: There is a watchmaker named Evghenyev. Can you not give him a little assistance and help him get on his feet? He is a weak man, but good at heart. Good-bye. Fedyo."

LISA.

He has killed himself. He has...

KARENIN.

(Rings the bell and runs into the anteroom.) Get Mr. Vosnessensky back.

LISA.

I knew it, I knew it, Fedyo, dear Fedyo...

KARENIN.

Lisa!

LISA.

It was not true, it was not true that I did not love him. I did, I do, I love him only. And I have driven him to his death. Leave me. (Enter VOSNESSENSKY.)

KARENIN.

Where is Feodor Vasilyevitch? What did they tell you about him?

VOSNESSENSKY.

They told me that he had gone out in the morning, left this letter and had not returned.

KARENIN.

I must find out about this, Lisa, I'll leave you now.

LISA.

Forgive me, I cannot lie either. Leave me now, and go and learn the truth.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A cheap restaurant.

CHARACTERS.

FEDYA.

PETUSHKOV, an artist, an attentive, mild-mannered man with long hair and clerical aspect.

ARTEMYEV, a man of shady character, with a cockade, dyed mustache, patched and ragged clothes.

WAITER.

POLICEMAN.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Dirty room in a cheap restaurant. Guests drinking tea and liquor at a table. In the foreground a little table. FEDYA, tattered and apparently fallen very low, sitting with PETUSHKOV, an attentive, mild-mannered man, of clerical aspect, with long hair. They are both slightly intoxicated.

PETUSHKOV.

I understand. I understand. That's true love. Well, and what?

FEDYA.

Well, if such sentiments were manifested by a girl of our own circle, if such a girl were to sacrifice everything for a man she loved, but here was a Gipsy girl, brought up in an atmosphere of greed, and exhibiting such pure and self-denying love. There's a contrast for you.

PETUSHKOV.

Yes, that's what we painters call "color value." Only then can you get a perfectly bright scarlet if you have green around it. But that's not **the** point. I understand. I understand.

FEDYA.

Yes, and I think it's the only good point in my favor that I did not take advantage of this love. And do you know why?

PETUSHKOV.

Did you feel sorry for her?

FEDYA.

No, no. I never felt sorry for her. I just rejoiced in her, and oh how she could sing, or perhaps sings even now! And I always looked up to her. I did not ruin her simply because I loved her. I loved her truly. And now this is the one truly sweet and good memory. (*He drinks.*)

PETUSHKOV.

Yes, I understand, I understand.

FEDYA.

Let me tell you, I had other infatuations. Once I fell in love with a woman, a beautiful one she was, and I loved her with a vulgar passion, like a dog, and finally she granted me a rendez-vous: and I passed it up because I felt it would be a dirty trick on her husband. And queer enough, when I recall the circumstances, and feel like patting myself on the back and boasting of having done an honorable act, I almost kick myself instead, as though sorry for not having sinned. But in Masha's case—nothing of the kind. I shall always rejoice that I had never defiled this holy affection... I may fall lower still, I may be submerged...

PETUSHKOV.

I understand, I understand.. But where is she now?

FEDYA.

I don't know... And I don't care to know. That was an incident from another life.. And I don't want to mix it up with my present.

(At the table behind them a woman screams. The landlord fetches a policeman and she is led away. FEDYA AND PETUSHKOV watch the incident in silence.)

PETUSHKOV.

(When quiet is restored.) Yes, you have led a very strange life.

FEDYA.

No, a very simple one. In the sphere where I was born there are three roads open to us, one of which we must choose: first the government service, with its money making and adding to the corruption in which we live. This course was repulsive to me. The second course is to fight corruption, and this calls for a hero, and I was not of heroic mold. And the third and last is seeking oblivion in drink, carousal and song—that was the course I chose, and this is where my singing brought me. *(He drinks.)*

PETUSHKOV.

Well, and what about home life? I should have been happy if I had had a good wife. My wife was my ruin.

FEDYA.

Home life? Yes. My wife was an ideal woman. She is still living. But what shall I say? She lacked sparkle. You know the sparkle in cider. Well, there was no sparkle to our life. And I longed to forget myself. But how could I, with the sparkle lacking? And then I commenced to act vilely. And you must know that we love people because of the good that we have done them, and hate people because of the evil that we may have inflicted upon them. And I had done much evil against her. But seemingly she loved me.

PETUSHKOV.

Why do you say "seemingly"?

FEDYA.

I say that because somehow she had never managed to steal her way into my inmost soul like Masha did. But that's not the point. When she was on the eve of child-birth, and later when baby came, I'd go out and get lost and come back a drunken wreck. And of course, because of these same things, I loved her less and less.. Just so. (*Delightedly.*) A thought just comes to me. I fancy I love Masha because I always did good by her instead of evil. And that's why I love her. And the other one I abused, and because of that I don't say I don't love her.. No, I really don't love her. I used to be jealous of her at times, but that's a thing of the past.

(Enter ARTEMYEV, with dyed mustache, wearing a shabby patched suit of clothes and a decoration.)

ARTEMYEV.

Good appetite, gentlemen. (*Bows to FEDYA.*) I see you've made friends with our artist, the painter.

FEDYA.

(*Icily.*) Yes, we're acquainted.

ARTEMYEV.

(*To PETUSHKOV.*) Well, have you finished the portrait?

PETUSHKOV.

No, it didn't go through.

ARTEMYEV.

(*Sitting down.*) Hope I am not in the way? (*FEDYA and PETUSHKOV remain silent.*)

PETUSHKOV.

Feodor Vasilyevitch was telling me about his life.

ARTEMYEV.

Secrets, hey? Then I shan't intrude, go ahead. Swine!

(*Walks over to the adjoining table, orders beer, listening all the while to the conversation of FEDYA and PETUSHKOV, leaning over to hear better.*)

FEDYA.

I dont' like this individual.

PETUSHKOV.

He seemed offended.

FEDYA.

Well, forget him. I can't stand him. With such a man around I find no words. But with you, for instance, I feel at ease and comfortable. Well, what was it I was talking about?

PETUSHKOV.

You were talking about being jealous of your wife. And how did you separate?

FEDYA.

Ah! (*Lost in thought.*) That is a remarkable story. My wife is married.

ETUSHKOV.

How is that? Was there a divorce?

FEDYA.

No. (*Smiles.*) I left her a widow.

PETUSHKOV.

Just what do you mean?

FEDYA.

Just what I said: a widow. I am not in existence.

PETUSHKOV.

How is that?

FEDYA.

No, I am not in existence. I am a corpse. That's what I am. (*ARTEMYEV leans over and listens.*) You see, I think I may tell you. This happened so long ago and you don't even know my real name. This is how it happened. I had really driven her mad with abuse and squandered all I could lay my hands on, and finally she could not stand me any longer. Just then her protector appeared on the scene—nothing improper or wrong, don't you know, no, just a good man, who had been my friend also, a very good man indeed, only my opposite in every respect. And since there was in me much more evil than good, that made him a very, very fine man: honorable, dependable, temperate, and simply virtuous. He had known my wife since early youth and had loved her, and when she married me he became reconciled to his fate. But then when I got nasty and began to abuse her, he started to call more frequently. This was just what I wanted. They grew to love one another, and about that time I went off the handle altogether, and abandoned my wife of my own accord. Just then I chanced to meet Masha. I suggested to them myself that they should marry. They were reluctant. But I was becoming more and more impossible and it ended by...

PETUSHKOV.

As it always does...

FEDYA.

No, differently. I am convinced and I know that they were blameless in their love. He was a religious man and considered a wedding without the benediction of the church

a sin. Well, they began to ask for a divorce, urging me to consent to it. It was necessary for me to take the guilt on my shoulders. This required a whole lot of lying. I could not do it. Believe me I found it easier to think of suicide than to go through that mess of lies. And I was about to take that step. And then a kindly person comes and says: 'Why that?' And we arranged everything. I sent a farewell letter, and the next day they found my clothes, my pocket book and letters on the river bank. I didn't know how to swim.

PETUSHKOV.

But how about the body? They didn't find the body?

FEDYA.

They did. Just imagine. A week later a body was found. The wife was called to view it. It was badly decomposed. She took one look. 'Is it he?' 'It is he.' And it was left that way. I was buried, and they got married and they have lived happily ever since. And as for me—here I am. Living and drinking. Last night I walked past their house. The windows were lighted, somebody's shadow flitted past the blind. And sometimes I feel bad, and sometimes I'm all right. I feel bad when I have no money.
(Drinks.)

(ARTEMYEV joins them.)

ARTEMYEV.

Pardon me, but I overheard your story. It's a very fine story, and the main thing it's a useful one. You say you feel bad when you have no money? But in your posi-

tion you need never be without money. You're a corpse. Fine.

FEDYA.

Pardon me, but I did not tell this story to you and I don't need your advice.

ARTEMYEV.

And I intend to give you advice. You're a corpse, and if you should come back to life, then they, your wife and the gentleman with whom she lives so happily, are bigamists and the least that can happen to them is to be sent to less distant parts of Siberia. Then why should you be without money?

FEDYA.

Please go away.

ARTEMYEV.

Just write them a letter, if you wish, I'll write it, only give me their address, and you will live to thank me.

FEDYA.

Go away, I tell you. I did not say a word to you.

ARTEMYEV.

Ah, but you did. Here's a witness. The waiter heard you say you were a corpse.

WAITER.

I don't know a thing.

FEDYA.

Scoundrel!

ARTEMYEV.

You call me a scoundrel? Say, officer, make a report.

(FEDYA rises to go. ARTEMYEV holds him back. A policeman enters.)

ACT V.

SCENE II.

CHARACTERS.

KARENIN.

LISA.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA KARENINA.

LISA'S CHILD.

NURSE.



ACT V.

SCENE II.

House in the country. Ivy-covered porch. ANNA DMITRIEVNA KARENINA. LISA (enceinte). NURSE and CHILD.

LISA.

He is on his way from the station by now.

CHILD.

Who?

LISA.

Papa.

CHILD.

Papa's coming from the station!

LISA.

C'est étonnant comme il l'aime, tout à fait comme son père).*

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

*Tant mieux. Se souvient-il de son père véritable?**)*

**) It's amazing how he loves him, just like his own father.*

***) So much the better. Does he remember his real father?*

LISA.

(*With a sigh.*) I never tell him. I don't think it's wise to confuse him. And then again I think sometimes it's necessary to tell him. What do you think, *maman*?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

I think, Lisa, it's a matter of sentiment, and if you yield to your sentiment, your heart will prompt you what to say and when to say it. How death reconciles! I confess that there were times when Fedyá—I had known him since he was a boy—was very disagreeable to me, but I have retained only the memory of a dear youth, Victor's friend, the impulsive man who made the supreme sacrifice—against law and religion though it was—for the sake of those whom he loved. *On aura beau dire l'action est belle**). I trust Victor will not forget the wool, I'm all out of it. (*Knitting.*)

LISA.

There he comes. (*The sound of wheels and harness bells.* LISA rises and crosses over to the railing of the porch. He has brought somebody with him. A lady with a hat. Why it's mama. I haven't seen her in a century. (*Goes to the door.*)

(Enter KARENIN and ANNA PAVLOVNA.)

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

(*Exchanging kisses with LISA and ANNA DMITRIEVNA.*) Victor met me in town and brought me along.

*) One might well say it was a noble act.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

I'm glad he did.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

So am I, of course. I was wondering when I'd have a chance of seeing her and kept putting it off. But here I am, and if you don't drive me away, I'll stay until the evening train.

VICTOR.

(*Kissing his wife, mother and the boy.*) And I'm so happy. Congratulate me. Two days' leave. They'll do without me to-morrow.

LISA.

Wonderful. Two days! First two days in a long while. Suppose we drive over to the monastery? What do you say?

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

What a resemblance. What a fine looking boy. If only he does not inherit anything else except his father's heart.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Not his weakness, for instance.

LISA.

Everything, everything. Victor agrees with me. If Fedya had only been guided right since his early days..

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

I don't know anything about that. I only cannot think of him without tears.

LISA.

Neither can we. He has grown in our memory.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

I think he has.

LISA.

How the tangle seemed insoluble for a time. And how suddenly it was unraveled.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Well, Victor, have you brought the wool?

VICTOR.

I have. (*Takes his bag and searches for the wool.*) Here's the wool, here's some eau-de-Cologne, and here is the mail, and a letter with an official seal addressed to you. (*He hands it to his wife.*) Well, Anna Pavlovna, if you wish to wash up, I shall show you the way, and I must clean up myself, dinner is almost due. Lisa, the lower floor corner room for Anna Pavlovna, am I right?

(*LISA, with blanched face, trembling, holds a document in her hands, reading it.*)

VICTOR.

What's the matter, Lisa? What's in the letter?

LISA.

He is alive! My God! When is he going to set me free? Victor! What does it mean? (*Sobs.*)

VICTOR.

(*Takes the document and reads it.*) Why, it's dreadful.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

What is it? Tell me.

VICTOR.

It's dreadful. He is living. And she is a bigamist and a criminal. This is a document from the investigating magistrate. It's a summons for Lisa.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

What a dreadful man. Why did he do that?

VICTOR.

Nothing but lies.

LISA.

Oh, how I hate him! I don't know what I am saying.

(*Exit in tears. VICTOR follows her.*)

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Can it be that he lives?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

I always knew that the moment Victor came in contact with that world of filth, they would eventually drag him down. And now they've succeeded. It's all a fraud and a network of lies.

ACT VI.

SCENE I.

The office of the investigating magistrate.

CHARACTERS.

LISA.

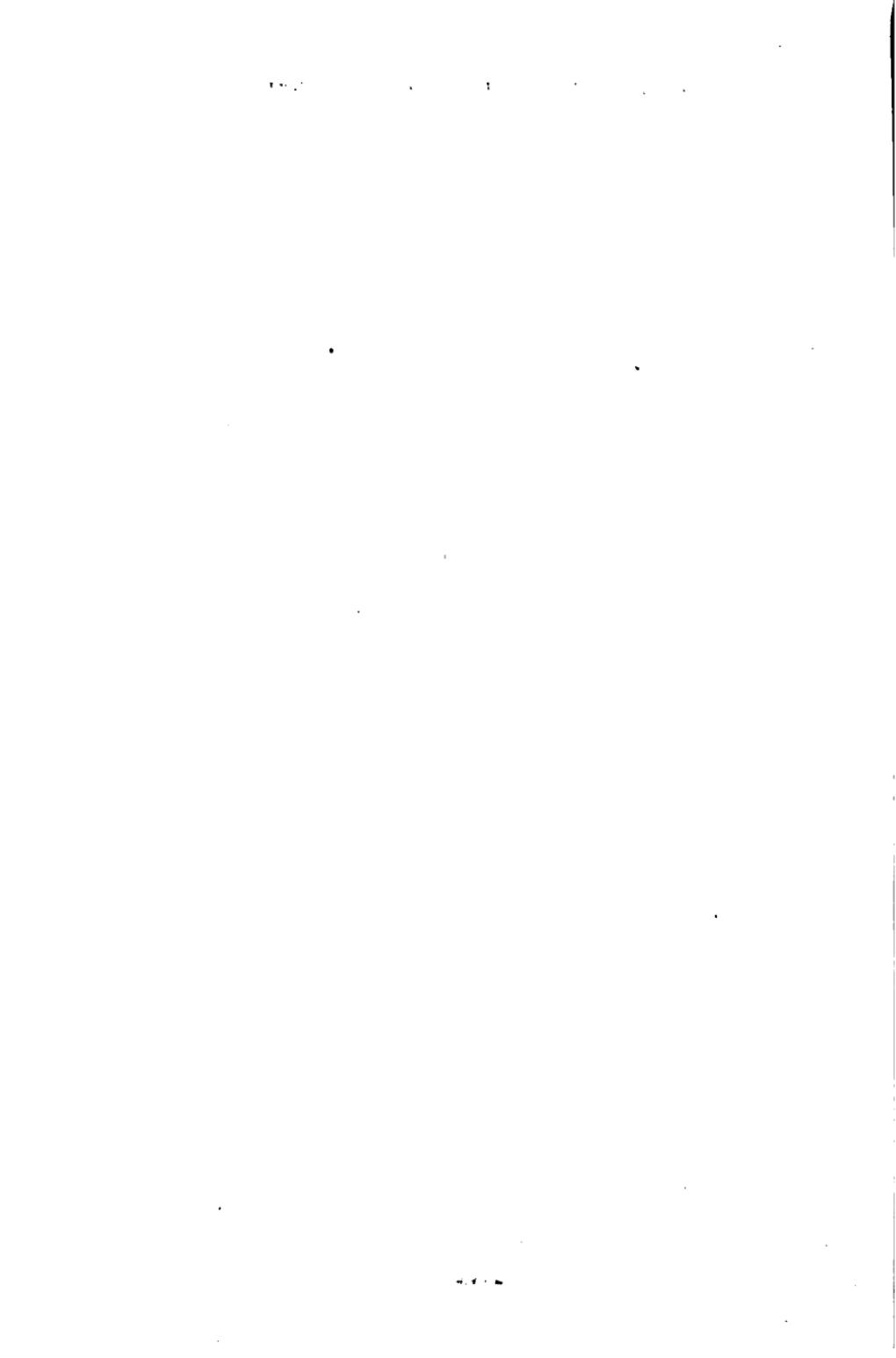
KARENIN.

FEDYA.

MAGISTRATE.

MELNIKOV, a friend of the magistrate.

MAGISTRATE'S CLERK.



ACT VI.

SCENE I.

Office of the investigating MAGISTRATE. The MAGISTRATE is seated at the desk, engaged in conversation with MELNIKOV. The CLERK is looking through documents.)

MAGISTRATE.

I never told her that. She just invented it and now she heaps reproaches upon me.

MELNIKOV.

She does not reproach you, but she is grieved.

MAGISTRATE.

All right then, I'll come to dinner. And now we have a very interesting case. Ask them in.

CLERK.

Both of them?

MAGISTRATE.

(Finishing his cigarette and hiding it.) No, ask Madame Karenina alone, or to be more correct, after her first husband Madame Protasova.

MELNIKOV.

(*Departing.*) Ah, it's Madame Karenina.

MAGISTRATE.

Yes, rather a dirty case. While I'm just starting to investigate, I can already tell that it's a nasty piece of business. Well, good-bye. (*Exit MELNIKOV.*)

(*Enter LISA, heavily veiled.*)

MAGISTRATE.

Please, sit down. (*Pointing to the chair.*) Believe me that I greatly deplore to be compelled to ask you some questions, but this is a case of necessity. Please calm yourself and remember that you are not obliged to answer. Only in my opinion the best thing for you, and for all concerned, is to tell the whole truth. It is always the best and the most practical thing.

LISA.

I have nothing to conceal.

MAGISTRATE.

All right, then. (*Looks at the document.*) Your name, social status, religion, all these data I have already noted. Is this all correct?

LISA.

Yes.

MAGISTRATE.

You are accused of having contracted a marriage although you had knowledge that your first husband was living at the time.

LISA.

I did not know it.

MAGISTRATE.

And of having induced your husband, by bribing him with money, to commit a fraud, simulating a suicide, in order to be free from him.

LISA.

This is entirely untrue.

MAGISTRATE.

Then permit me to ask you a few questions. Did you send him the sum of twelve hundred roubles last July?

LISA.

That was his own money, proceeds of a sale of his personal effects. And as at the time we had parted and I was expecting a divorce, I had this money sent to him.

MAGISTRATE.

Very well. Very well. This money was sent on the seventeenth of July, which was two days before he disappeared.

LISA.

I think it may have been the seventeenth day of July. I don't remember accurately.

MAGISTRATE.

And why were the proceedings before the consistory suddenly discontinued about that time and the lawyer dismissed?

LISA.

I don't know.

MAGISTRATE.

Well, and when the police invited you to identify the corpse, why did you identify it as the body of your husband?

LISA.

I was so agitated that I did not take a good look at the body and felt so convinced that it was he that when they asked me whether it was he indeed, I said I thought it was.

MAGISTRATE.

You failed to make a careful examination as the result of natural agitation. Very well. And now let me ask you why did you send a monthly remittance of funds to Saratov, the very town where your husband had been living since?

LISA.

My husband sent this money, but I can say nothing

about its destination, for it is not my secret. Only this money was not sent to Feodor Vasilyevitch. We were fully convinced that he was no longer alive. That I can truthfully affirm.

MAGISTRATE.

Very well, I may only remark, madam, that while we are the servants of the law, we still are human. And believe me that I can appreciate your position and sympathize with you. You were tied up to a man who was squandering his fortune, was unfaithful, in a word made his family unhappy.

LISA.

I loved him.

MAGISTRATE.

But nevertheless the desire to be freed from him was natural and you chose that simpler course, not thinking that it might lead you to the commission of the crime of bigamy—I understand that. And the judges will too. And therefore I should advise you to make a clean breast of it.

LISA.

I have nothing to reveal. I never lied. (*Sobbing.*) Am I needed any longer?

MAGISTRATE.

I should suggest that you remain here awhile. I shall not trouble you with further questions. Only kindly read this and sign it. Here is the list of questions. Have your

answers been taken down accurately? Please come here.
(*Points to the chair near the window. To the CLERK.*)
Ask Mr. Karenin to come in.

(Enter KARENIN, *severe and solemn.*)

MAGISTRATE.

Sit down, please.

KARENIN.

Thank you. (*Remains standing.*) What do you wish?

MAGISTRATE.

I am compelled to question you.

KARENIN.

In what capacity?

MAGISTRATE.

(*With a smile.*) As far as I am concerned, in the capacity of examining magistrate, and as far as you are concerned in the capacity of a defendant.

KARENIN.

Is that so? Accused of what?

MAGISTRATE.

Accused of marrying a woman having a living husband. However, permit me to ask you my questions in proper order. Sit down please.

KARENIN.

Thank you.

MAGISTRATE.

Your name?

KARENIN.

Victor Karenin.

MAGISTRATE.

Your status?

KARENIN.

Gentleman-in-waiting at the Court, councillor of state.

MAGISTRATE.

Age?

KARENIN.

38.

MAGISTRATE.

Religion?

KARENIN.

Orthodox. Never previously tried or under judicial investigation. Well, what next?

MAGISTRATE.

Did you know that Feodor Vasilyevitch Protasov was living when you entered into matrimony with his wife?

KARENIN.

No, we were both convinced that he had been drowned.

MAGISTRATE.

To whom in Saratov have you been sending monthly remittances after the false news of Protasov's death?

KARENIN.

I do not choose to answer this question.

MAGISTRATE.

Very well. For what purpose did you send the sum of twelve hundred roubles to Mr. Protasov on the seventeenth day of July, immediately before his simulation of suicide?

KARENIN.

This money was given me by my wife.

MAGISTRATE.

By Madame Protasova?

KARENIN.

By my wife, to be sent to the man who then was her husband. This money was considered his own property, and since she had broken with him, she felt it improper to keep that money.

MAGISTRATE.

One more question then. Why did you discontinue the divorce proceedings?

KARENIN.

Because Feodor Vasilyevitch undertook to attend to that and had written to that effect.

MAGISTRATE.

Have you that letter?

KARENIN.

That letter has been lost.

MAGISTRATE.

Very strange that the very thing which could convince a court of justice of the correctness of your statement should have been lost.

KARENIN.

Do you wish anything more?

MAGISTRATE.

I have no wishes excepting to fulfil my duty, but it is up to you to justify yourself, and I gave Madame Protasova a piece of advice which I repeat to you: to conceal nothing which is evident to all, and to state just what did happen. Moreover, Mr. Protasov is in such a state that he has made already important admissions in the case and will doubtless do the same in court. I should advise you...

KARENIN.

I should request you not to exceed the limits of your duties and to spare me your advice. May we go? (*Proceeds towards LISA, who rises and takes his arm.*)

MAGISTRATE.

I greatly regret that I must detain you. (*KARENIN turns around in surprise.*) No, not in the sense of arrest. Although that course would be more suitable with a view to arriving at the truth, nevertheless I shall not adopt it. I only intended to examine Protasov in your presence, and to confront you with him, so that you might conveniently disprove any of his misstatements. Please sit down. Call Mr. Protasov.

(*Enter FEDYA, dirty and in rags.*)

FEDYA.

(*To LISA and KARENIN.*) Lisa, Elisaveta Andreyevna, Victor, I am not to blame. I had meant it for the best. And if I am to blame, forgive me, forgive me. (*He bows to the ground before them.*)

MAGISTRATE.

Please answer my questions.

FEDYA.

State them.

MAGISTRATE.

Your name?

FEDYA.

You know it.

MAGISTRATE.

Please answer.

FEDYA.

All right, Feodor Protasov.

MAGISTRATE.

Your status, age, religion.

FEDYA.

Are you not ashamed of yourself to ask me such silly trifles? Ask what is necessary, don't ask me to answer trifles.

MAGISTRATE.

I should ask you to be more careful in your expressions and to answer my questions.

FEDYA.

Well, if you are not ashamed of yourself, all right then: My status—candidate of laws, age—40, religion—orthodox. What next?

MAGISTRATE.

Did Mr. Karenin and your wife know that you were alive when you left your clothing on the river bank and disappeared?

FEDYA.

Certainly not. I really intended to kill myself, but then... Now that I don't have to tell you. The fact is that they did not know a thing.

MAGISTRATE.

And why did you make a different statement to a police official?

FEDYA.

What police official? The one who locked me up at the lodging house? I was drunk and was feeding him on all sorts of tales. That was all rubbish. But I am not drunk now and I am telling the whole truth. They did not know a thing. They believed that I was dead. And I was glad of it. And so it would have remained but for that scoundrel Artemyev. And if anyone is to blame, it is I alone.

MAGISTRATE.

I realize that you are trying to be magnanimous, but the law requires truth. Why was money sent to you?

(FEDYA *maintains silence.*)

MAGISTRATE.

You received money sent you to Saratov through Semenov?

(FEDYA *still silent.*)

MAGISTRATE.

Why don't you answer? It will be entered in the minutes that the defendant refused to answer these questions and that may prove very injurious both to you and to them. Well, what about it?

FEDYA.

(*After a pause.*) Shame on you, Mr. Magistrate. Why do you pry into other people's private affairs? Are you so pleased with your authority that in order to exhibit it you

must inflict moral tortures on people who are a thousand times better than you?

MAGISTRATE.

I ask you...

FEDYA.

Don't ask me. I'll tell you what I think of you. And you put it down. (*To the CLERK.*) For once there will be something rational and human in your minutes. (*Raising his voice.*) There were three people: he, she and I. The relations between these three were tangled, there was a struggle between good and evil, a spiritual struggle of which you can have no conception. This struggle is terminated by a certain situation which disentangled all. Everybody was at peace. Everybody was happy. They cherished my memory. I, in my downfall, was happy to have done the right thing, in having gone out of their lives, good-for-nothing that I was, ceasing to be an obstacle in their way, who were good people and longed to live. And we all lived. Suddenly a scoundrel appeared on the scene who urged me to take part in a blackmailing scheme against them. I repelled him. Then he hunted you up, you, the champion of justice, the custodian of morality. And you, receiving on the twentieth of each month your miserable pittance for the dirty work which you do, you donned your uniform, and are now frivolously airing your power over us, people whose little finger is worth more than your carcass, people who would not admit you into the vestibule of their home. Well, you've got along so far and you are happy...

MAGISTRATE.

I'll have you put out of the room.

FEDYA.

I'm not afraid of anybody, because I am a corpse and you can't do a thing to me; there is no situation that could be worse than my present state. So have me put out.

KARENIN.

May we go?

MAGISTRATE.

One moment, only sign the minutes.

FEDYA.

How funny you would be, if you were not so low.

MAGISTRATE.

Have him taken away. You're under arrest.

FEDYA.

(To KARENIN and LISA.) Forgive me then...

KARENIN.

(Crossing over to FEDYA, offers him his hand.) It had to come to this evidently.

(LISA passes, FEDYA bows low before her.)

ACT VI.

SCENE II.

Corridor of the Circuit Court.

CHARACTERS.

FEDYA.

PETRUSHIN, his lawyer, a stout, ruddy, lively person.

IVAN PETROVITCH ALEXANDROV.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

KARENIN.

LISA.

SASHA.

PETRUSHKOV.

MESSENGER.

YOUNG BARRISTER, (in dress-suit*).

DOCTOR.

OFFICER.

LADY.

LAWYERS.

SPECTATORS, men and women.

JUDGES.

DEFENDANTS.

WITNESSES.

*) Lawyers pleading in Russian courts are required to appear in evening dress.



ACT VI.

SCENE II.

Corridor of the Circuit Court. In the background a glass door, before which a GUARD is stationed. On the right a door through which the prisoners are taken to court. IVAN PETROVITCH ALEXANDROV approaches the first door. He is in rags and is attempting to pass.

GUARD.

Where are you going? You can't come in. The nerve of him!

IVAN PETROVITCH.

Why not? Does not the law say that court trials are public? (*Sound of applause from within.*)

GUARD

You can't, I say, and that's the end of it. Such are the orders.

IVAN PETROVITCH.

Ignoramus! You don't know to whom you are talking.

(Enter YOUNG BARRISTER *in a dress-suit.*)

YOUNG BARRISTER.

Are you here on business?

IVAN PETROVITCH.

No, I'm one of the public, but this ignoramus of a Cerberus will not let me pass.

YOUNG BARRISTER.

But this is not the public entrance.

IVAN PETROVITCH.

I know, but he could let me in just the same.

YOUNG BARRISTER.

Wait a few minutes, there will be a recess. (*Is about to go, but stops on catching sight of PRINCE ABRESKOV.*)

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Can you tell me how the case is progressing?

YOUNG BARRISTER.

The counsel are making their pleas. Petrushin is speaking now. (*Renewed applause from within.*)

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

How do the defendants bear their situation?

YOUNG BARRISTER.

With much dignity, particularly Karenin and Elisaveta Andreyevna. It is not they who are on trial; our society

is on trial before them. That's the way you feel. Petrushin is playing up to that feeling.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Well, and Protasov?

YOUNG BARRISTER.

He is terribly agitated. He is shaking all over. Well that's easily accounted for by his mode of living. And he seems to be so irritable, he interrupted the prosecutor and the counsel several times. He is in a peculiarly excited frame of mind.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

And what do you think will be the outcome?

YOUNG BARRISTER.

It's hard to say. In any event lack of premeditation is admitted. (*The door opens, a gentleman comes out. PRINCE ABRESKOV edges his way to the door.*) Would you like to come in?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Yes.

YOUNG BARRISTER.

You are Prince Abreskov?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I am.

YOUNG BARRISTER.

(*To the GUARD.*) Let this gentleman pass. There is a vacant chair on the left as you go in.

(*The GUARD admits PRINCE ABRESKOV.*
The door opens, permitting a view of a barrister in the act of delivering a plea.)

IVAN PETROVITCH.

Aristocrats! I am an aristocrat of the intellect. That's something higher.

YOUNG BARRISTER.

Well, you must pardon me. (*Passes him by.*)

(*Enter PETUSHKOV, hurriedly.*)

PETUSHKOV.

How do you do, Ivan Petrovitch? How is the case progressing?

IVAN PETROVITCH.

Counsel are making their pleas. But they won't admit us.

GUARD.

No noise, please, this is no liquor shop. (*Renewed outburst of applause, doors are opened, lawyers, spectators of both sexes come out.*)

(*Enter a LADY and an OFFICER.*)

LADY.

Wonderful, he had touched me to tears.

OFFICER.

Beats fiction all hollow. Only I can't understand how she could have loved him. He's such a dreadful mess.

(Another door opens, the defendants come out, first among them LISA and KARENIN, they pace up and down the corridor, behind them FEDYA, alone.)

LADY.

Hush! There he comes. Look how excited he seems.

FEDYA.

(To IVAN PETROVITCH.) Have you brought it?

IVAN PETROVITCH.

Here it is. *(Hands him something.)*

FEDYA.

(Hides it in his pocket and is about to go, then observes PETRUSHKOV.) Stupid, vulgar, tiresome. Tiresome, senseless. *(Starts away.)*

(Enter PETRUSHIN, his lawyer, a stout, ruddy, lively persons.)

PETRUSHIN.

Well, dear fellow, our case is doing nicely, only don't

you go and spoil it when your turn comes to make your last statement.

FEDYA.

I don't intend to speak at all. What should I say? I shan't say a word.

PETRUSHIN.

No, but you must. Only don't be excited. The whole case is cut and dried now. All you have to say is to repeat what you said to me, that you are being tried for having failed to commit suicide, a thing which is considered a crime both by the civil and by the ecclesiastical law.

FEDYA.

I shan't say a word.

PETRUSHIN.

Why not?

FEDYA.

I don't want to speak and I shan't. Tell me only, what can happen, worst come to the worst?

PETRUSHIN.

In the worst event, deportation to Siberia.

FEDYA.

Whose deportation?

PETRUSHIN.

For yourself and your wife.

FEDYA.

And in the most favorable event?

PETRUSHIN.

Church penance, and, of course, the dissolution of the second marriage.

FEDYA.

That means that I am to be tied to her again or rather she to me?

PETRUSHIN.

Why that's the proper thing. But don't you get excited. And please speak up as I have instructed you, and above all don't say a word too much or out of the way. By the way (*looking around and finding a crowd of listeners*) I am all worn out, and I'll sit down and rest. And you rest awhile too. But above all don't lose courage.

FEDYA.

And can there be no other solution?

PETRUSHIN.

(*Going.*) None whatever.

(*Enter a COURT ATTENDANT.*)

COURT ATTENDANT.

Pass along, pass along, please don't loiter in the corridor.

FEDYA.

Right away. (*Takes out a revolver and shoots himself. He falls. Everybody rushes to his side.*) I think I have managed it all right. Lisa!

(*People rush in through every door; judges, witnesses, the public. LISA is in front of the crowd, back of her MASHA, KARENIN, IVAN PETROVITCH, PRINCE ABRESKOV.*)

LISA.

What have you done, Fedyta? Why?

FEDYA.

Forgive me, I was unable to get you out of this mess any other way. No, not for your sake... It's better so for myself. I was ready long ago.

LISA.

You will live. (*DOCTOR leans over him, with his ear to his breast.*)

FEDYA.

I know without the doctor. Victor, good-bye. And, Masha, you've come too late this time. (*With a sob.*) Oh how good it is... how good!

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